WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF

LOUIS TUCKER

Class 226.8 Book P942x

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By

LOUIS TUCKER

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS INDIANAPOLIS

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107724
226.8
P942t

Printed in the United States of America

PRINTED AND BOUND BY
BRAUNWORTH & CO., INC.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

To

HUDSON STUCK

LATE ARCHDEACON OF THE YUKON,

WHO SUGGESTED THIS STORY.

I know a man who walked, but now shall ride.
At his left side
A cross-hilt sword invisible he bore.
Whenever he was near you could half hear
The clash of unseen golden spurs he wore.
Often when he was nigh you heard near by
Somewhere a white horse stamping as it stood;
And that all this was so he did not know
And thought himself a poor priest, far from good:
But I, who hear in part and dimly see,
Knew him for one of Heaven's chivalry.

For, oh, my King has Captains, and they stand
On either hand
In long bright rows; and, one by one, they bring
The new men armed aright from the good fight
To stand among the captains of the King;
And neither you nor I shall ride thereby
As not found worthy; but we sometimes mark
Men faithful unto death, to the last breath,
Out of the great waste spaces and the dark
And know that they have grown His chosen men
To ride behind Him when He comes again.

Wherefore I dreamed the knights of the Most High
As they rode by
On great white horses; and they came and came
And, reining past the bed where he lay dead
Saluted him with swords of cold pure flame.
Trusted and true and tried and side by side
The long ranks stood and watched him, face to face;
Wherefore he roused and rose; whereupon those
His peers and equals made for him due place
And rode with him to where we can not be.
West-over-sea they went, west-over-sea.

FOREWORD

THIS book is a tribute to the genius of General Lew Wallace. To him, and to the late Archdeacon Stuck, the writer makes grateful acknowledgment. No doubt the reader of this novel will be struck with its resemblance to *Ben Hur,* a resemblance which is neither accidental nor plagiaristic. *Ben Hur* was the story of a good man, whose only wrong action was his revenge upon Messala; and neither he nor his creator thought of that as wrong. Archdeacon Stuck remarked on this one day in a talk with the writer, and added that some one ought to write an historical novel of the time of Christ showing the changes in the character of a bad man by contact with Jesus. *When He Came to Himself* is an attempt to act on this suggestion.

The parallelism of the first scenes is therefore deliberate. Addai bar Ad meets disaster and goes to Rome as Ben Hur did. Again, like Ben Hur, he returns to Judea and finds the Master. There is the likeness. The divergence is due to the difference in character of the two men. That is the story, and the apology for the story.

In questions of scholarship the admirable Edersheim (*Life of Jesus the Messiah*) is here followed. There is, therefore, a good reason for every position taken here concerning the life and teachings of Christ. Any one interested may verify from Edersheim.

Concerning credibility, the four Gospels are treated as contemporary documents written by eye-witnesses or (in places) compiled from the accounts of eye-witnesses. This position, unpopular among scholars, has

been forced upon the writer by the advance in knowledge of Greek dialect due to the very recent discoveries of manuscript in the Fayoum. We can now date any considerable document written in Greek dialect to within about ten years of its origin: and the four Gospels, so tested, fall well within the date-limits assigned to them by tradition. We can not yet prove who wrote them: but Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were alive when they were published and able to deny authorship if not guilty; so it is here assumed that they are responsible.

L. T.

WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF

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I

"Beautiful," said Bar Ad.

"Most beautiful," smiled Karis, and dropped her lattice window and her rose.

He caught the red rose, raised it to his lips, then put it in his bosom. Leaning back against the wall, his head just below the closed lattice, he murmured: "Most loveliest."

The lattice laughed.

"This Gully of the Coppersmiths is kinder to lovers than Astarte's bower; for here the hammers of the workmen cloak our speech. I love you dearly at first sight. How much more must I love you when I can see you always? I am not married. Are you?"

The lattice shook negatively.

"I should have known you are too young for that. Where is your door?"

Bar Ad was six feet two, and, to a man, looked like a Colossian wolf-hound just emerging from puppyhood which would be a good dog later. To women he looked better. A white woolen tunic, a linen robe, a vast, silken, yellow cloak, made him dignified. His girdle was gold-embroidered. Robed like a Syrian prince he had swept into the gully, taking up all the space from wall to wall. Now he waited long, pretending to watch a smith make a vast red-copper kettle, and watched him-

self by the whole street. The lattice was still, though he spoke whenever the noise grew loud enough to mask his voice. It breathed, however.

He left at last sure that his only perfect friend in all the world watched him through violet eyes under black hair, and loved and laughed at him.

Bar Ad searched out the local Jewish banker.

"Men tell me you are John bar Akkad," he said. "I am Addai bar Ad. My father is a prince in Israel. His land lies on the Plain of Armageddon. I am his second son. Two weeks ago I made the ritual demand the law requires: 'Father, give me the portion of goods which falleth to me.' He gave only in part, for it takes time to turn half the personal property of an estate into cash. I rode into the Dekapolis to search for some good place to settle down and enter business, to make my own living. I like your town of Hippos, enough, at least, to try it. Here is a draft signed by my father. You may, perhaps, recognize the signature. It is well known. I will deposit this with you and draw against it later. I have enough with me for present expenses. I want to rent a house. I have a friend and horses in the caravansary, having spent ten days riding from town to town."

Though wizened and precise, Bar Akkad proved efficient. In an hour Bar Ad was master of a house just outside the Coppersmiths' quarter and in another was established there with the horses and his father's steward, Shalluq. Little furniture was needed. Life, from the Oriental's point of view, is one continuous pilgrimage between birth and death; so he dispenses with chairs and beds and tables and lives on cushions and a caravan outfit.

Domestic slavery was rare among the Jews. They might be peasants, but they were freemen. In the Dekapolis, however, it was common. The dominant Greek landowners had many slaves, and Bar Ad was

angry, at the moment, with all things Jewish. Under pretense of taking trouble off his hands, Shalluq bought him a household.

"This vast red cook," Shalluq reported, "is named Zoe—a good name for a cook. The lean house-girl, Kallia, was a golden flute-girl when younger. Your horse-boy, Kreon, is young but knows his work. As for this fat steward, Petrokephalus, his last owner liked him. Get dinner, Zoe, quickly. Salute your young master, all of you, and begone."

Shalluq arranged with Petrokephalus for regular information about Bar Ad, set the horse-boy to watch the steward and the cook to watch both, put the fear of the Lord into all four by promise of proper rewards and punishments and hurried home. Then Bar Ad strode several times a day for several days through the dim alley of the Coppersmiths without result, except to buy more copper pots and pans than were needed for housekeeping.

These excursions were not lost upon his sophisticated household. The only thing they missed was that he really cared; because they did not believe that any one ever really cared about anybody. If they had been capable of that faith they could have made their freedom out of it. Petrokephalus, his little pig eyes a-twinkle, skilfully asked the necessary questions, then persuaded Bar Ad to take a booth in the bazaar and sell perfumes. "Buy a stock of alabastrons," he suggested. "Fill them with nard and other perfumes, give us a handful of didrachmæ and we will do the rest."

Bar Ad rented a store about the size of a stall in his stable, displayed his stock and sat on a yellow cushion on the floor, looking like the Crown Prince of Kashmir and waiting for customers.

Meanwhile Kallia faded through the houses of the hetairai—the public entertainers—in the Gully of the Coppersmiths and spread the news that a rich young

rustic was playing at storekeeping. She made the usual bargain of a share in the spoils for herself and his other servants.

Next day she came—not Kallia, but She—escorted by a shrewd old woman. Bar Ad was bored, supposing her another like the twenty girls or so who had preceded her, for Kallia had worked fast and well. Then he looked up and everything in the shop became hers. She chose what she wanted and ordered him to bring the bundle after her with such a smile that, but for Kreon, he would have failed to lock the door. She led him to the bare house above the coppersmith's, gave him bread and sherbert and asked how so princely a person came to keep a shop.

"To give you alabastrons," bowed Bar Ad.

"Then help me try them on," blushed Karis.

With trembling fingers Bar Ad put a chain around her neck and thrilled as he touched her fragrant hair. He let the rounded alabastron hang down outside her stola. There was a pause.

"It—it goes within my breast," faltered Karis, and put it there.

Bar Ad, tingling, adjusted the other alabastrons correctly.

"Tell me your story," smiled Karis, when all the alabastrons were tried on.

"Tell me yours first, little Karis," said Bar Ad.

Karis was far too intelligent to lie.

"If we are to be good friends," she said, "each one must trust the other. Addai, I am a Babylonian, free-born, orphan of a Greek father and a Hebrew mother. As a helpless child I was taken by old Kora, who came with me to your shop. She trained me, had me well educated, and supported me; so that, though free, I am now her debtor and could, if I rebelled against her, be sold as a slave. When Kora's savings ended and life grew difficult in Babylon, we came to

Hippos, where the peasants and tradespeople are Hebrew but the rich men Greek, and my knowledge of both Greek and Aramaic would be a help. I am sixteen, and Kora is about to launch me as a hetaira.

"Why, then, leave a great city like Babylon?"

"Kora—you see how I trust you—Kora has debts there. Now tell your story, Addai."

"My father is Ad bar Ad, of the Plain of Megiddo, in Galilee. Herod the Great killed most of the large landowners. My father escaped by staying abroad in Rome and Babylon. He fought a campaign with the legions, then handled army contracts honestly for Augustus. Cæsar Augustus confiscated most of the profits, but the service saved my father's land. My mother was a noble Jewess of Carthage. She died in Rome. Then my father came home, bringing his two sons. He is the kind of man who, if they had lived together, would have been the friend of Abraham who was the friend of God. He looks like Elijah and thinks like Ezekiel. There is a town-house in Jerusalem and we go up to Passover; but, mostly, he is content to read King David and the prophets at home.

"My elder brother, Simon bar Ad, has been my lifelong enemy. He is red, short and square, and he broods. He spends much time in the orchards and fields and hopes the crop will be better than he expects. He will have the land and half the money. I have the younger brother's portion—the other half. Yet he has always been envious, because I am taller and stronger and the servants like me. My father gave me horses. I kept them on the high sheep-ranges, the level tops of the blue whale-backed mountains. Foxes are there and, now and then, a wolf. I stayed at home as little as I could, for, when I stayed, Simon nagged me. At last, three weeks ago, I broke away. He carries his land like an invisible blanket over his soul and the fringes of it choke me."

"Go on. Why did you break away?"

"A woman brought the crisis—and I have hardly looked at a woman in all my life. Martha, the housekeeper, our old nurse, wants to stay on when Simon is master. She heard and told Simon—so Shalluq says—that Miriam, the young and only daughter of Bar Kor, the nearest large landowner, had spoken well of me because, on my last hunt, I crawled into a cave with a knife in my teeth and came out dragging a dead wolf. I never noticed Miriam except as a dear child, sweet and friendly as a merry child should be; but her acres endear her to Simon. Therefore he felt it time for me to go. He picked the usual quarrel with me that night, pretended to get very angry and, at last, struck me. I struck back—you should have seen him sprawl! Our father, learning of it, spoke that reproof, which, he said, my superior size and strength demanded.

"There was no use staying. Simon would pick a quarrel with me every night and strike me. I asked my portion of the goods and rode from home—and found you, little Karis."

"Poor fellow," pitied Karis. "Poor fellow," and stole a small hand into his.

Karis could sing well and play the cithara. She could speak four languages well. Addai could speak Greek and Aramaic himself. She could dance charmingly. A pretty flute-girl came in to furnish the music in a dress so Babylonian, so lovely and so daring that it took Bar Ad's breath away until Karis, vanishing, returned in one even lovelier and quite heroic. She knew the great Greek poets and philosophers and quoted them, dismissing Charmion, the flute-girl, and nestling in the cushions by his side. Her reading, and even her knowledge of the world, gained, as she explained, by watching from her window, were greater than Bar Ad's; and, oh, she did not want to be a hetaira! In an hour she owned Bar Ad, body and purse and soul.

II

SHALLUQ, when he left, searched out gray-haired Bar Akkad, the banker, and talked. "The boy is a good boy," he ended, "gone wrong from anger. He will be useless until he has flung away his money. My master would give much for regular and intelligent word of him."

"Your master is a prince in Israel. Word he shall have without a gift. I had a boy myself, once, who flung from home in adolescent fury and died—ah, me!—before he could come back. When Addai's money ends, shall I help him?"

"Only to save life, Bar Akkad. He needs the sharpest lesson he can have, short of destruction."

Shalluq swung on his horse in a brown study, thinking of bankers. The Jewish banking-system was a vast invisible influence in the ancient Empire. Pilgrims came to Jerusalem from every city in the world and all brought money—some of them much money. Common honesty was pretty nearly unknown, except between Hebrews. Traveling was unsafe. It was very dangerous to carry gold or jewels. Hebrews from all over the world, going up to Passover, took a little expense-money with them but paid the rest for a letter to a money-changer at Jerusalem telling him to give the bearer a sum of money which would be repaid. Passwords and means of identification made sure that it was paid to the right man. This was so convenient that Gentiles took advantage of it for transporting money, and centuries of honesty built up a tremendous business. There was money-changing—the rudimentary beginnings of a bank—in every city and town between Chester and Delhi, mostly run by a Hebrew. Men in

Rome, Alexandria and every other great city handled letters of credit; but Jerusalem was the only city in the world to which, because of the pilgrimage system, responsible men from every other city in the world came regularly. Therefore, in the long last, all the commercial paper in the world passed through her hands and she took quolbon on it—a heavy percentage. She was the solar-plexus of finance. She gathered toll on every important money transaction everywhere; and, by that toll, directly or indirectly, millions in Palestine were supported. Addai would be watched and checked where possible.

Shalluq rode thoughtfully down into the valley of the Hieromax and to the ford at Bethabara, where the paved Roman road to the Dekapolis crossed Jordan. He did not chat nor linger on the way, for the ancient land of Ephraim, east of Galilee, was an exasperation to every Jew. The first man he spoke to was the bare-legged Hebrew ford-keeper who made his living by leading horses across for an infinitesimal coin.

"When we leave Dekapolis we wash our horses' very feet before we go into good homely Galilee," said this man, spitting down-stream. "A Roman cavalry-patrol is due in an hour. Romans keep the main roads safe except from themselves. Turn from the road before you meet them. A pretty girl or so beautiful a mare as yours disappears if she attract the attention of a centurion, and turns up later in the slave-market or horse-rings of Alexandria or Babylon."

"At least, the Romans keep the Greeks off!" growled Shalluq in Latin, and shook his fist at the shore he had left.

"Ho, friend who speaks in Latin, let me join you. I ride silent for half a day among Greeks and Aramaics."

The speaker, a compact young decurion, borrowed to drill the native garrison at Capernaum, had crossed the ford just ahead of Shalluq. He urged his hired

post-horse to Shalluq's side and introduced himself as Caius Curio, going down to Cæsarea on leave, and, anxious to learn as much as possible about natives, he had ridden out of his way to see Dekapolis. He ended: "It seems a pleasant land. Why do you curse it?"

Such a question, to any Jew, was like opening floodgates of a millrace. In rapid Latin, much more precise than Curio's own, Shalluq explained that the Dekapolis, once definitely Hebrew and part of the Kingdom, was now overshadowed by Europe. For four centuries before the Romans came, Greeks were the dominant race of the globe and deserved to be. They were better fighters than the Persians, better traders, Shalluq reluctantly admitted, than the Phœnicians or the Jews, and better municipal politicians than anybody. Acre by acre, house by house and, at last, city government by city government, they gained control of the old land of Ephraim and renamed it the Dekapolis. They won local political self-government by helping Pompey the Great at a crisis in one of his campaigns. The Hebrew hated Tyre and loathed Sidon, he abominated Antioch and his opinion of all Egypt except Alexandria was unquotable; but these four hatreds rolled into one were a mere nothing compared with his anger at the Dekapolis.

At the first pause Curio pointed out that these Greeks were European and efficient. Their handling of the larger commercial problems of Syria was definitely abler than that of the Jews. The forty teeming millions of Mesopotamia were just a few hundred miles to the east. The cities of the Dekapolis were thus gateways to the Orient. They gave European order and justice on the edges of tortured Oriental anarchy. Jews flocked to them in myriads to live under European law and flourish in the stream of commerce between two continents. "To this," he smiled, "we Romans added roads"—and he pointed.

It was true. The Roman road before them, ten cubits wide and paved with flagstones, wound its way up into the hills like a many-colored serpent. It was crowded, for the population of Palestine was the densest in the world. Pilate took a census once, by which it works out at between ten and twelve million—a thousand to the square mile. "I see," remarked Curio, "that you farm here to the last limits, for food. You make every blade of grass tell. You move all precious merchandise between two continents on mules and a few camels. A man walks at the head of each and millions must live from such men's wages. You produce all you use. What the common people can not make at home they do without. Most live in simplicity and poverty. Yet how do such multitudes manage to live at all?"—and he raised his eyebrows, then swept his arm in a wide gesture.

"The support of the land," answered Shalluq, "which makes the density of population possible, is the multitude of pilgrims. Judea, south of us, is center of the religious pilgrimages of the world and therefore the money center also. In the beginning every nation worshiped the One God. By earliest dawn of history, however, men held the One God too holy to approach, so they personified His attributes and worshiped them instead. They called His wisdom 'Minerva,' His creative power, 'Osiris,' and so on. Mankind therefore rots idolatrous in a foul blackness of evil pantheons in every country except one. In Palestine we still serve the One God. It is quite true we serve Him badly; but who does better?"

"We worship Mars consistently," mused Curio. "However, I have no wish to quarrel with a friendly stranger about the gods; the more so since I, and every other thinking man in what you call the heathen world, perfectly agree with you that there are no such persons as Mars, Osiris and Minerva. The mob at Rome sneers

that the priests themselves smile as the Augurs read the auspices. There are no gods. Except for purposes of pageantry and curious tradition, earth has no religion."

"By grim historic changes strange as the strangest," went on Shalluq, "a colony of men who worship the One God was planted in every city in the known world and, by their binding law, every man of them must go up to God's temple three times a year, health and means permitting. As it works out, every one goes at least once in his life, though there are so many of us that it seems to a stranger that the whole life of Palestine passes going up to and coming back from Dedication and Tabernacles and Passover. Therefore every colony of Jews in the blue world—which is a much bigger place than the Empire—has at least one representative at the greatest feast every year, even if men club together to send him. Three million come. Most are from Palestine itself; the rest from every city and kingdom under heaven. All bring money and the nation lives on it."

They rode a while in silence and reached the table-land at the top without meeting Romans. Shalluq led Curio aside from the crowded road to a great out-jutting bastion of the heights. "Look!" he said, pointing.

Curio gazed eastward at the blue hills that hid Hippos, across that rainbow-rimmed abyss of Jordan from which he had just climbed. Then he swept his eye a hundred miles along that crystal-clear cleft, growing ever deeper toward the south, and took a long breath.

"This," he said softly, "makes you think of God."

"The Holy Land is the best commentary on the Holy Book," agreed Shalluq.

It was quite true. The titanic convulsion which, ages ago, cut through the table-lands of Africa that vast chasm which holds the central lakes and the Nile, split parallel to it another gulf, the southern three-quarters

of which is filled by the Red Sea. The upper end is Jordan Valley; which at once isolates and explains Palestine. Power, power immeasureable, power unthinkable, as ancient as the world and more stupendous, has so left its great signature on that small country for any man to read that none may miss it.

"The marl and volcanic ash of Jordan, when irrigated," explained Shalluq, "is rich as Nile mud and one tenth the area of Egypt. That is why Jordan Valley, below us, is green and full of towns. The whaleback limestone mountains behind us between the river and the Mediterranean, are in Asia and yet practically the anteroom to Africa. Therefore they have been the scarlet battle-ground of two continents since men fought with teeth and clubs. The bottom of Jordan cleft makes a road and there is a flat road along the seacoast. Peaceful as it is now, the Plain of Megiddo, west of us, where these roads meet, has seen more grim stark fighting than any equal number of red acres in the world.

"This land is small—eight easy days' walk long and five broad; yet, as you see, it holds high mountains, one of them snow-capped, three lakes, the deepest wady in the world and the main road between two densely populated continents. It is therefore the gatekeeper of civilization. Yet, highroad as it is, it is almost as isolated as an island. On the east is a desert without roads, on the west is a sea without harbors, on the south is a waste of shifting sand and the north is blocked by a range of really great mountains."

Shalluq surveyed the central chasm with his physical and the rest with his mental eye, and silently thanked God that the wayward boy he loved, though in one sense so far away, was within a hard day's ride of home. Then he dismounted and spoke to his black mare:

"So, Esther; so, girl. Breathe a while and follow."

Esther, after her kind, was as beautiful as Karis. She cocked one inquisitive ear and nuzzled his girdle for

breadcrusts until he gave one; then followed him, with dainty steps, to the point of the promentory.

"Almost as dear as your young master, but not so great a fool," commended Shalluq, patting her satin neck while she whickered delighted assent. "We turned aside to save you, girl. See there!" Esther watched the flicker of bright arms as a Roman patrol went down the long winding road into the half-mile chasm.

"I see," smiled Curio, raising his eyebrows, "you do not trust a Roman."

"You, sir, have made yourself a friend; but the centurion of the patrol outranks you and the ford-keeper hinted he has an eye for horses."

"Farewell, then," said Curio, "and thanks for good instruction. In an hour I should be far toward Cæsarea. May the gods—who do not exist—may the One God who made the world be with you."

He wheeled and rode away, and Shalluq, left alone, meditated on how best to soften news to his master's ears; for Shalluq, like Esther, was perfect after his kind—the house-dog kind. Spade-bearded, grizzled, intelligent but not brilliant, wise but not too cultivated, he would have caught the eye anywhere else as a steady dependable lieutenant for an able captain; but where he stood, nothing less than a city could catch the eye; and before him lay many clear-cut cities.

For this oasis, this island in the yellow desert, was almost as crowded as the traditional raft after a shipwreck. All trees were gone except fruit-trees. Men cooked with cow dung and wisps of twisted hay, and houses had no chimneys. Irrigation ditches ran high on the flanks of all hills. Every available inch was watered and lovingly gardened, or set to perfectly tended orchard. A very little plot in dates or figs would support a family in comfort. As an eagle was the symbol of Rome or a winged bull of Babylon, so the symbol of the Oasis, stamped on its shekels, was a fig-tree

in an irrigated vineyard. Shalluq looked down upon a dozen cities and a hundred towns set jewel-like in a green watered paradise.

Yet this little calamity of a country was full of anarchy. Small as it was it was cut up into divisions that snarled at one another. Their point of unity had been Herod the Great, the richest man in the world and one of the ablest and most cruel. Herod managed to kill most of his officers and nobility before he died; but such as survived and kept their money or land were counted as princes in Israel.

Among these was Shalluq's master; for Herod's death brought home most Jewish landholders. Rome was really a group of slave-holding plantation-owners and she took the world by placidly assimilating the great landowners everywhere and supporting them against both common people and kings.

The Roman patrol was now half a mile below him, fording Jordan at Bethabara, among a many-colored crowd; so Shalluq rode west again, calculating distances on a footman's basis, for he foresaw that when Addai came home it would be on foot, after he had sold his horse. The Dekapolis was just across a little lake from Galilee, but ancient Palestine was a pedestrian land. Men rode horses, mules and camels, it is true, but others led them. Faster time can be made on foot. Yet men on foot could not go alone, except along a few well-patrolled roads. Men had to join a caravan for protection and walk at caravan-pace; except during Passover, when all the nation was on the move and the crowd swiftly avenged any disorder by mob methods.

Fifteen miles a day was average for a caravan. A copper coin as big as a thumb-nail paid liberally for a day's protection. Small as it was this coin took most men about two days to earn. Fifty miles meant three days in time and a week's wages. Any one who sent a letter had to pay the messenger's expenses. Shalluq

could ride from Hippos to Armageddon in a day; but a good horse was as costly as a small house, and people did not measure distance on a horseback basis.

The estate was a thousand jugers, inherited from Ezra's time and well placed on the southern edge of Megiddo, where the plain touches the high hills. It was irrigated, hence a lush garden of beauty. The house was part old stone, part clay; a one-story flat-roofed "palace" of fifty rooms, built around a lovely gardened courtyard. Ad bar Ad stood on the front terrace as Shalluq rode up, stroking his great beard.

"Is all well with the lad?" he asked.

"In body, yes," mourned Shalluq, "in spirit, no. He will be robbed and speedily. He will never set up a younger son's business until he has lost all."

"Then he will the quicker come to himself. Where did he settle?"

"Pardon, my master, I did my best."

"I know you did, old friend. Where is he?"

"At Hippos in Dekapolis."

"A far, far, wicked country. May God forgive him. Why did he choose Hippos?"

"It was a girl, sir. I could not learn who she is; but, from his talk of stupid pretty Greek faces, she can not be Greek."

Palestine had the Oriental equivalent of compulsory education, and Hebrew girls, as well as boys, were taught to read that they might read the Bible. Greeks avoided educating their women. Therefore respectable Greek women looked stupid, even when pretty.

"Whoever she is, she will drain him in a year," ended Shalluq.

"O God of Israel," prayed Ad bar Ad, looking up with hands raised, "Thou hast never had a son; yet we are all Thy sons and gone astray; yea, gone astray. Make this, my dear son who is dead to me, alive again. Let him who is now lost be found."

III

"Where's Addai, Kora?"

"He came an hour ago, Karis. You were at the bazaar. I sent in Melitta, the new flute-girl, with bread, fruit and wine and orders to entertain him."

"Spiteful! Because I made him take us before the city magistrates and pay off what I owed you?"

"Yes, if you will have it! He forced me to accept the money and sign release for the debt. I am no longer mistress in my own house but a dependent in yours."

Karis dropped a kiss on Kora's frown and laughed.

"Housekeeper, not dependent. You and I can not really quarrel, Kora. We are too necessary to each other. I am your nursling. I have but done what you would in my place."

"And I what you would,—monkey! Melitta is a lovely girl. She has been with him an hour."

"How was she dressed?"

"She was not. If you are jealous, marry him."

"I can do that at any time. Then this lovely little Roman villa outside the walls which he bought and gave me would be his instead of mine. All things are possible in Hippos. There are magnificent princes in this district with incomes of a million sestertia a month. The fortune of an incompetent younger son, who does not even try to make a living, does not attract me. Besides I shall soon get it all, anyhow. I'm sorry, too, because I like him."

The Grecian hetairai were institutions. Respectable Greek women were, by custom, required to be beautiful but dull. In beauty they might fail, but dulness was compulsory. They stayed at home and gossiped. They

lived, mentally, on one another's reputations. If a Greek man felt the need of intelligent female companionship he went outside and bought it.

There were educated, beautiful and intelligent Greek women a plenty, but they were not respectable. Far back in Sappho's time a Greek feminist movement had half succeeded—only half, because the young girls failed to carry the married women with them. What the housekeepers did to the girls' reputations may be imagined. From that time on the Greeks had a class of public entertainers who were brilliant, witty, cultivated and charming, but who were officially assumed to have no morals.

Every Greek colony, therefore, held hetairai. Bar Ad found that Greek men had athletic clubs of their own. They had a few little inns and eating places. They had theaters, but a Greek theater was a vast municipal affair with a play on for a week every six months or so. They sometimes gave elaborate dinners with exhibition dancing and variety-acts at their homes, but that was all. The rest of their social life was bound up with the hetairai—the "companions." Greek ladies held that the houses of the hetairai were sinks of scarlet iniquity. They were not. Many hetairai were personally absolutely moral—as moral as their critics and more intelligent—much more intelligent. But no Greek woman had any religion to keep her safe. There was no certainty of purity anywhere. So the hetairai as a whole were jealously classed by Greek housekeepers as vilest of the vile.

Karis said, "Call the girls."

Charmion and half a dozen other smiling flute-girls came. Karis disarranged their dresses until they seemed just risen from naps or called from other duties on some sudden alarm. Then she put finger on lip and, at the head of a lovely bevy, stole silently to the door of the library and peeped through the curtains.

They saw a very charming picture. Bar Ad lay back in a luxurious chair and Melitta sat among the dishes on the table in front of him, swinging her little sandalled feet and talking discontentedly:

"All of the flute-girls in this house are pretty and clever and some of them are beautiful," she said. "They say that you are kind and courteous but care only for Karis. How am I to entertain you when they fail?"

"You are very beautiful," said Bar Ad. "It is a pleasure to look at you."

"Yes," said Melitta, pouting, "but I have sung for you, I have danced for you, I have posed for you, I have sat on your knees, I have embraced you, and you have not even kissed me."

Kora was a worn old woman with blazing eyes and an astringent voice, but she could pick pretty and clever girls. The beauty on the table was no lovelier than those behind the curtain.

They had to be both pretty and intelligent. Karis had made Bar Ad use what introductions he could extract from Bar Akkad, the banker, to meet rich young Greeks. These entertained him at the houses of hetairai. The entertainments shocked Bar Ad at first, but were really a little slow. Nobody got drunk; for Greeks were temperate. Wildly undraped girls danced before the men, but men and girls never danced together. The songs, except a few personal lampoons, were great classics and beautiful as moonlight over water; and the talk, while anything but demure, was much too rapid and witty to be vulgar. Greeks, as a race, were without morals, but they despised vulgarity; and, besides, every man was used to naked slave-girls, having half a dozen at home. In accordance with good Greek custom Bar Ad returned these entertainments, using Karis' house and ideas.

As Bar Ad's friends and Karis' guests increased,

Kora bought more girls to entertain them. Also, after experience with Bar Ad's soft-heartedness, she bought Babylonian slaves to discipline the girls.

Melitta made a face at Bar Ad, and mourned:

"If I don't entertain you better than this, Kora will be angry with me; and if I do, Karis will."

"Not in the least," laughed Karis, running in. "You are to do what you are told just as well as you possibly can. I am not a bit jealous. I'll prove it. Come, Clotho. Come, Lachis, Charmion, all you girls, and bring Melitta with you. Prove to the master that the color on your cheeks is not paint and the whiteness of your skin is not chalk. Help with this pin, Charmion. Now into the impluvium fountain with me, all of you."

"Do let us keep one garment, Karis dear."

"The smallest, then, and thinnest. You are not Romans or you would not care."

"Must we wet our hair, Karis?"

"No, but be sure to wash your faces. Now scramble out and stand in line before the master. Melitta, stand beside me. Look well at us, Addai. See that our cheeks are still rosy and our skin is white. Who is the fairest here?"

"Why, you are, little Karis."

"Melitta, stand back to back with me. Who is the taller, Addai?"

"She is, but you are the more shapely."

"Melitta, stand on his left side as I on his right. Now draw his arm around you. Whose waist is the more slender? Whose hands and feet are smaller? Whose skin is softer, Addai?"

"Why, yours, dear Karis."

"Shake your beautiful golden hair down, Melitta. Help take down my black mane, Charmion. Now, Addai, run your hand through her hair and then through mine. Whose is the silkier?"

"Yours, Karis."

"Now take her in your arms and kiss her carefully. Do it slowly and well, as I have taught you. Now do the same to me. Whose scarlet lips are sweeter, Addai?"

"Karis, these are all lovely girls. Melitta is worthy to be with them. They are clever, too, and kind and submissive. I like them; but I do not love them. You, Karis, are the fairest of them all. I love you."

"Then, give me what I want. Make me the fashion."

Karis saw to it after this that every new flute-girl repeatedly bore Bar Ad's minute inspection in comparison with herself, that she danced and played and sang for him, sat on his knees and fully understood that he was master; but Karis was a bottomless gulf for money. She needed it. She saw to it that Bar Ad accepted as many invitations as possible and gave enough dinners in return to make her popular. At each of these she danced, sang, posed, talked, cleverly showed herself off in every way against a larger and larger background of carefully subordinated, beautiful slave-girls of many lands and ideas. She made Bar Ad the fashion; for the only way to hear her bright songs and witty speeches was to ask him to dinner; and she made herself doubly and trebly the fashion while advancing him.

Prosperity, in the Dekapolis, flowed largely from the Hieromax, a little river about seventy miles long which rose in a dozen sources in the Hauran Mountains near the eastern desert and emptied into Jordan. Sometimes its rains failed. Then the imperturbable desert extended its borders a trifle and thousands died.

Such a drought came now, and people began to fall dead in the streets. Even at best the Roman Empire was always a little hungry. So many millions lived on the ragged edge of starvation that, in a world without food-transport except by mule and camel, the slightest change for the worse destroyed thousands. The expense of Bar Ad's two households increased first ten, then fifteenfold.

Shalluq brought the last draft due and left, saying the drought was local and Galilee waved green with wheat. Then Bar Ad began to foresee ruin. He had lived more than a year in a haze of wine and anger and then of wine and love, from which nothing stood out clearly except Karis and a young Greek named Kleomenes who was often found with her. Kleomenes was a dapper little landowner with a tiny mustache, who lived by raising pork for the Roman garrison at Tiberias and wrote a great deal of surprisingly good verse, mostly to Melitta. As Bar Ad saw the end of his means approaching he drifted into playing dice with Kleomenes. He won more often than he lost, but the sums were small and of no real help to him.

Then, when the famine was at its height and everything cost twenty prices, Karis announced a little name-day banquet of her own; the first she had ever given. All her friends were to come and bring presents. Bar Ad, that morning, provoked a bout at dice with Kleomenes, Karis furnishing the dice. Underground information from Bar Akkad, the banker, or something in Bar Ad's manner, spread a sense of climax through the house and girls lined the doors and, as the excitement grew, pushed into the room. Bar Ad lost. At last he emptied his girdle and staked everything on one throw. Karis, to bring him luck, leaned back among her cushions and offered her heart for his dicing-table and his last throw was made between Karis' panting breasts. He lost and fled the house, cursing the look that passed between Karis and Kleomenes.

The banquet preparations were elaborate. Karis now owned fifteen slave-girls, besides flute-players, so the thirty wealthiest young men of the city were invited. Sixteen couches, four on a side, made to hold three each, were ranged around a hollow square of narrow trestle-work tables in the atrium with the impluvium, the basin of the plashing sunken fountain, in the midst.

The guests were placed three on a couch, and their feet washed with perfumed water and dried carefully. Then some of the girls played harps, drums and flutes softly from the shadows. The rest served a good supper on silver dishes. Bar Ad lay next to Karis; but, on the other side of her, lay Kleomenes.

Egyptians spiced banquets with tragedy, reminding men of death by throning a gilded mummy in the chair. Babylonians salted theirs with cruelty by scourging rebellious slaves before the guests. Romans did both, by matching gladiators. Greeks preferred women and wit. The ancient Greek had no morals nor home life. He scorned truth in men and virtue in women. He had lost his ancestral courage. Sin meant nothing to him. He was corrupt through and through and therefore absolutely tolerant of evil. But he *did* have taste. Bare flesh of reputable women, Roman drunkenness and gluttony, and seeking of personal privacy in pairs, shocked the wickedest Greek into remarks about savages and, later, into blushing and profane withdrawal. Yet the worst spectacles on any stage hardly interested Greeks at all.

Therefore, when Karis rose and clapped her hands, every one expected a scarlet dance and, when her two Babylonian men-slaves came in dragging with them Charmion, her chief flute-girl, they were relieved. Karis assumed the great lady and called in her golden voice:

"My friends and masters, some of you doubt if I keep order in my household. Look and see. Bar Ad played at dice here with our poet this morning. He lost all he had with him. Charmion, excited beyond herself, said falsely that the dice were loaded. Here they are. Examine for yourselves. Such insolence as Charmion's deserves the lash. Slaves, scourge her."

Garment by garment the male slaves prepared Charmion for punishment. She was lovely and defiant. The dice, she sobbed, *were* loaded. A whip of thirteen lashes

was produced. Charmion, helplessly spread-eagled between the two men, writhed, wept and struggled, swept out of one graceful attitude into another, shrieked for mercy and then prayed for rescue. Things were rapidly getting beyond Greek taste when a beautiful child, half-disguised as Cupid, ran in and belabored Charmion with an empty bladder. Then flutes struck up and the two girls whirled into a romping gymnastic dance that ended when both fell into the impluvium. They were rescued, dried and deposited, Charmion and Cupid together, on a couch between two young men, where they gaily laughed and chattered.

Then all the girls except the flute-players danced—but these young men all had dancing-girls at home. They felt that exhibition-dances are really inspections of the female form and, after all, pretty young women are very much alike. They chatted and were bored. The audience grew interested again when the slave-girls gave a mock-athletic contest, singing appropriate passages from Homer as they boxed, wrestled, jumped, fenced, and flung reed spears at each other, each ivory pair romping into a hand-to-hand struggle, then a wrestling-match and toppling into the the impluvium at last. Elaborately dried by the slaves and given a dry wisp of garment, each girl was stowed on a couch between two men for laughter, food and wit. Yet nobody got drunk, and the girls were slaves, not volunteers. They obeyed orders and were not immodest by their own choice.

Then Karis posed, very beautifully, as Pallas, and called for presents. One by one every man rose, went up to her, kissed her and laid a jewel or a purse of gold at her feet. Each received something from her; a garment, a sandal, a flower, or a pin from her hair. Bar Ad was last and she had so planned that there was nothing left for him—as any one could see. Then Karis came and sat upon the couch on the other side of Kleomenes, pouting.

"Why leave me?" muttered Bar Ad.

"Since Kleomenes gave me the prettier present."

"The ruby brooch you have of me cost four slaves, a horse as beautiful as you, a chest of garments and every coin I have in the world."

"Just as I feared. All the more need, then, that I go under the protection of Kleomenes. He has lands, purses of gold and many chests of garments. There is a famine, and I and my household can not starve!"

"But you are mine."

Then Karis gave the best dramatic exhibition of the evening!

"I am no slave!" she cried in her ringing golden voice. "I am a free Greek woman of Babylon. I belong to no man. I will not be enslaved. You say you own me, Jew and bargainer. I call on all free Greeks for protection. Flouted, maligned, insulted in my own house on my own birthday, I will not submit. Save me! Nay, I will save myself!"—Then, turning to the Babylonian slaves—"Throw the insulter out!"

The situation appealed perfectly to the Greek sense of humor. Every one was delighted except Bar Ad. He grimly flung off the two slaves and stalked down the room; while Karis, laughing, threw herself into the arms of Kleomenes, and the girls, sitting up, began a burlesque ode of farewell which must have been prepared and memorized beforehand. Bar Ad turned at the door, took a long black look at all, and left them with a comprehensive Hebrew curse—his exit as perfect in dramatic keeping as Karis planned it should be.

IV

Addai bar Ad, for the first time in his life, was hungry. "When Israel is reduced to the carob-tree he repenteth," says a Rabbinical proverb to which the New Testament alludes.

After the intolerable banquet at which Karis finished him, he lay for a week or two in the black kennel of the beggar who once sat outside his door. In prosperity Bar Ad had given a coin now and then and issued orders that meant broken scraps of food. The crippled beggar was grateful. Classical writers record common gratitude in almost nobody. Hard sophisticated cynicism filled its place.

The hand of famine lay heavy on the land. The massed myriads of the Dekapolis writhed and withered under it like ants under a firebrand. Bar Ad lay dazed for days on Eliasar's filthy rags, in an arch like a half-sewer, under a bridge, drinking water and eating, now and then, a crust that Eliasar gave him, ill not so much in body as in mind. Then something broke in him and he snapped awake, because Eliasar did not drag himself out one morning but lay, a mere bag of bones, too weak to move.

Bar Ad was weak and lean himself, but clear-headed and in good health. The fast had taken the tallow and suet of a year of guzzling and gormandizing off his frame. He crawled out and shook himself and, lo, he could stand. He would have died gladly before he sought help for himself; but, for the sake of Eliasar he dragged himself to Karis' white villa and asked to see her. Naturally, he was refused. Equally naturally, he waited outside her door until some one he knew came in or out. The first was Kleomenes.

"Hail, Kleomenes," called Bar Ad. "I want work."

"I do not know you, fellow. Out of my way," piped Kleomenes, looking around for help.

"I am Addai Bar Ad of Armageddon," explained Addai, stepping into the path, "much improved by sleeping in the gutter and by starvation. You have my house and girl. It might as well be you. I could not keep them. Give me but work enough to eat by and I will bear no malice."

"No!"

"Be gentle, dear little poet, or I shall embrace you. I am hungry. What is worse, my only friend is starving!"

Kleomenes looked at Bar Ad's muddy clothes and his own dapperness, imagined himself in Bar Ad's arms and shuddered, but shook his head, complaining: "She cast you out and now she weeps for you." Then Bar Ad laughed.

"Kleomenes, I am sorry for you," he gasped at last, wiping his eyes. "If you help me and live, Karis will drain and ruin you; and if you do not help me, know that you are about to die. I might as well be killed resisting arrest for killing you as starve. Oh, Kleomenes, you have no heart, but you do have a poet's imagination. Picture yourself leaning over the man who saved your life and watch his breath come slow and slower, for lack of bread which he has given you."

"It is a pretty fancy for my next poem."

"You will never write that next poem, Kleomenes, unless you give me work. Man, give me work, with food enough to care for Eliasar till he recover, and I will forgive you everything, even your loaded dice. After all, they only hastened my end a week or two. I will not only forgive you, I will thank you. I will, for Eliasar's sake, I will even kneel to you."

"Do it," said Kleomenes.

"For the life of a friend," muttered Bar Ad, then

knelt and kissed the edge of Kleomenes' dove-gray cloak. "Now," he added, still holding it, "give, or you *must* die."

"Loose my mantle."

Bar Ad did so.

"Very well, Jew," sneered Kleomenes, "go feed my swine."

Bar Ad leaped up and Kleomenes went away hastily, laughing.

Bar Ad went also, wondering how, in so great a famine, pigs found anything to eat. Kleomenes' estate was west of Hippos, near the lake edge. Bar Ad reported to Melas, the steward, a thin and weary man who did not believe him or in anybody or anything else. Still, having had other instances of his master's humor, he conceded that the story might be true. He therefore told Bar Ad that he could go into the hog-pasture, if he liked, and beat down pods from carob-trees for pigs. For pay he might have carob-beans to eat.

Bar Ad borrowed a stick and joyfully hurried to the grove, where trees stood almost edgewise on land too rocky and steep for irrigation. First, he beat down a pile or two of the beans where the steward and the pigs could see him. Then he climbed a tree and gathered for himself. They were revolting; but, if chewed very fine indeed, they would give a little strength. Then, with the bosom of his robe and all the folds of his girdle full of beans, he plodded back to Hippos. He found Eliasar dead.

To the sketchy outline of what had once been a woman Bar Ad gave half his beans to have the other half boiled. In the strength of that meal he secretly buried Eliasar where he lay. Then he dragged himself back to the farm. There he beat down more beans, exchanged a double handful with a peasant for a pipkin and a coal of fire, and began a quiet life. Five or six hours a day he climbed about among the thorny trees

and beat down beans for hogs. The rest of the time he slept in a little pig-proof stone hovel he made, or lay in the green shade and watched the road; and all the time, even in his dreams, he thought.

Along that road passed all the motley life of Palestine, and Bar Ad now, since he had suffered, read suffering in faces. Therefore his thoughts, for the first time in his life, dealt with other things about people than the way they treated him and the emotions they caused him. Carob-beans will support life, but at the best, even when parched and ground to powder, they are not easily digested. His meditations were sharpened by steady hunger; yet torment of his soul was greater than that of his body, for he had just discovered the universe, as distinguished from himself, and was lonesome in it. He thought of his father and how he had been angry and ridiculed and hated his father and smirched his honorable name: and all the time his father had been right. Also, he thought of the good dinners his father provided. He saw roast geese in pairs. He saw great smoking dishes of broiled lamb chops. He saw platters of sliced bread and skins of wine. He saw, moreover, the wisdom which sets a thousand things in motion in order to bring food to table. He had, at last, passed the stage when he accepted cooks as the source of meals and come to see that their true source is the father of the house. One more step and he might see God as the Father of all households and so become a prince of the true Israel.

One evening, while meditating thus, he slid down to the road and stood on a boulder, with his arms on the wall, looking down on the road which clung to a hill-shelf a dozen feet below. A few thin people dragged past one by one, and he watched them idly and read the suffering in their faces. He did not really care—he had not grown that far—but, still, he noticed it. He did not really care for the grave beauty of the scene, either, though it was very beautiful. Yet Greeks had spoken

so much of beauty before him that he noticed that, too. It was ash-twilight and the lake of Galilee was turning from blue to silver.

Then Kleomenes, on horseback, wrapped in his pearl-gray cloak and, presumably, bound for Karis, rode quietly out of a lane from his house, and Bar Ad hid. Precisely under Bar Ad, Kleomenes reined in and turned to look at the lake. A stone from above would have brained him, and Bar Ad grasped the stone. He could leave Kleomenes dead and be safe in Galilee before sunrise. He was poising the stone when Kleomenes raised his hand and softly prayed:

"Father of all, Zeus, who made this world so beautiful, give me to make my verse as beautiful as this."

Bar Ad drew back, his brain in turmoil. That Kleomenes, like most educated Greeks, laughed at the gods and goddesses, Bar Ad knew well; but this was different. He had seen Greeks pray before, spilling a drop of wine or two and muttering, and felt it an empty and idolatrous formality; but this was genuine. That Kleomenes, Kleomenes, his chief enemy in the world except Simon, Kleomenes the heathen, Kleomenes the unchaste, was the man who prayed made it the more affecting. Bar Ad's own incontinence had cut him off from prayer for a year. Of course, it was the poetic side of Kleomenes' nature—his worship of beauty—which led him to prayer and not his moral side, for he had none; but, even so, that a heathen prayed while he did not, suddenly seemed ironic. Moreover, as Bar Ad realized with a shock, the prayer was heard. If Kleomenes had not prayed he would now be dead. "You can not," as Bar Ad repeated to himself when he lay under the open stars, trying to sleep and failing, "you really can not kill a man when he is praying to God our Father, not even Kleomenes! Suppose I also pray; I am not fit, but neither is he—and God heard Kleomenes." He rose, knelt, lifted thin hands to the far blue.

"Father of all, Adonai, who made the world so beautiful, I am hungry in heart and body. I am in shame and sorrow through my own folly. Oh, show me what to do," he whispered.

He fell asleep, reviewing his grievances against Kleomenes. He was amazed to see how changed they seemed. On the whole, Kleomenes had done nothing to him he would not have done to Kleomenes except the comic ode of farewell and the loaded dice; and the dice he had already promised to forgive. The swine-feeding was half meant as a kindness. Since Bar Ad could not keep Karis, Kleomenes, if he wanted her, did well to make sure she would come to him. He was glad that Kleomenes was not lying dead and he himself galloping to Galilee.

Where would he have gone in Galilee? Of course, in any real danger, to his father, who would feed him, send him abroad and find him work. The thought brought him bolt-upright and awake. Why not? What was the sense in staying here? It was as if a mist cleared from his brain. "I will arise and go to my father," he found himself saying over and over—"I will arise and go to my father." And then and there, taking his staff, he went.

V

THE great yellow farmhouse-palace of Ad bar Ad stood on the slope of a hill facing east, with the private road in sight to where it branched off from the paved highway to Sepphoris. The flat house-top was the view-point. Ad bar Ad was a very wise old man and had kept in sufficient touch with Addai to know the pinch had come; but how the boy would take it he did not know. He could only pray and hope. Before Addai left home at all it was easy to see that human birds of prey would steal his money while teaching him to fly.

"Send me for the lad," begged Shalluq. "Famine is strong in the land. Bar Akkad wrote that Karis cast him off and he has vanished."

"If you could find him he would come back with you, take what I could give him and run away again, when he next grew angry with Simon. He must come back of his own will," and Ad bar Ad stroked his great white beard.

Shalluq clasped his hands and begged: "Think, Ad bar Ad, Addai, our boy, is starving. I promised his dying mother——"

"I, too, promised his dying mother, Shalluq; and, every time I pray, I see him looking at me with his mother's eyes."

Ad bar Ad ordered Shalluq to Jerusalem to have the town-house repaired, and began to sit on the flat house-top and look out toward the highway. He used an armchair and an awning, kept young-eyed servants with him and read or settled business of the estate as usual; but he spent most waking hours on his roof. Therefore, when a hesitating, ragged tramp turned in from the main highway, Ad bar Ad saw him while he

was yet a great way off and ran to meet him before he could lose heart and slouch away again.

The sight of such a prince in Israel running upset the servants. They ran too. It was in the midst of half the household that Addai bar Ad was folded to his father's heart. They kissed each other and wept upon each other's shoulders. Then Addai knelt and said:

"Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants."

"Bring out the best robe," ordered Ad bar Ad, "and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Bring out the fatted calf and kill it; make ready a great feast; for this, my son, was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found."

Addai bar Ad could feel his self-respect unfolding like a flower. The cook and scullions whirled to work, the laborers streamed up from the village, every one who had flute or harp was put to playing and the under-stewards broached golden wine. They began to be very merry. Ad bar Ad's friends would rejoice with him. The servants ran to invite the neighboring landowners with their children.

Simon bar Ad was at the upper end of the estate, inspecting irrigation ditches. Nobody went for him. When he came back at dusk he heard music and dancing. He called a delighted servant, another, a third, and learned what had happened. Then he was angry and would not go in. The shocked servants took the news to his father, who came out. Simon attacked at once:

"Have I not been faithful, father? Have I not obeyed you? I never flung away in anger and left you. Yet you never made a feast for me. You never even gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but when this, your son, returns, who has wasted his living with harlots, you kill for him the fatted calf."

"You have no friends, Simon. My whole fortune is yours. Cease jealousy. It is right that we should make merry. This, your brother, was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found."

The quarrel was postponed since Bar Kor, with his little daughter Miriam, was there. It stayed postponed because the impending pilgrimage to Passover gave every one an outlet for his feelings. All Galilee rose like a flock of black and white pigeons and took to the roads at Passover. Addai made the trip in luxury, in the midst of an adoring household and mounted on a mule, or, leading one; for he walked mostly by the side of innocent little Miriam bath Kor. The two fathers looked on in approval, while Simon sulked.

In Jerusalem Ad bar Ad stayed much longer than usual, keeping Bar Kor and Miriam as his guests. He kept Passover feast, and worshiped God in the temple with his two sons and then his messengers grew busy; while Simon hurried back to Galilee under pretense of business of the estate.

"Father," said Addai, "I want to make thank-offering to God for bringing me home."

"A thank-offering of a bullock for every year of your life for me and another for your mother is made already, dear boy."

"Come with me, then, and let me offer sin-offering for myself."

Addai bought a lamb without blemish, out of his own money. He took this lamb before the temple altar. There he made confession of his sins to a priest. His father, by his request, stood within hearing. Then he laid his hand on the lamb's head, and the priest prayed that God would accept the innocent life of the lamb in place of the guilty life of Addai, forfeited by sin but now cleansed by repentance. The lamb was killed and burned. The priest marked a little of its blood on Addai's forehead and hands, gave him a morsel of its

cooked flesh to eat to unite its body with his body, and dismissed him, absolved.

"I would not have you think that the blood of bullocks or lambs takes away sin, Addai," explained his father, stroking his silver beard as they walked back from the temple. "Repentance is needed. The blood of the lamb of God, and its flesh, simply connect our blood and flesh with some great event, still future, to which our temple ritual points, which justifies, in God's great plan for the universe, the forgiveness of repented sin. Repentance, by itself, while it prevents future sin, does not cancel the effects of past sins. It takes love, forgiveness and something more, which God supplies, to do that."

"Turn, now, to worldly things. You had your share of my fortune and lost it. It would be unjust to Simon to give you more. Shall I therefore keep you as a dependent, on pocket-money, for Simon to cast off when I die? We will do better than that.

"I have bought Shalluq a stall among the money-changers, using your name. Such things go by favor. I could not have bought it for Shalluq alone. Quolbon is fourteen and two-sevenths per cent. When the various charges are paid it brings in about four hundred sestertia a day, on business worth about ten thousand sestertia. Of this four hundred Shalluq takes half. You and I divide the rest."

A hundred sestertia a day is a considerable sum. Addai thanked his father.

"It is enough for spending-money," was the answer. "It would never build up a fortune. To do that, some one must work for you besides Shalluq. I set your horse-boy up in business and your grooms, and your favorite house-servants, for Simon disliked them and discharged them. The cost would not have bought another good-sized diamond for Karis' little finger. Each business belongs to you. I have called in the

money. We will discharge those who did badly, I will reward those who did well, and we will use the best men in a new grain, oil and wine trade started in a small way in your name. Among other things, it shall handle the produce of the estate in Galilee. This will be gall and green wormwood to Simon, but not injustice. The estate sells to merchants at market price, and as well to you as any other."

Before Bar Kor left with Miriam the two fathers put their heads together and arranged a marriage between Miriam and Addai.

"The boy is no fool now," said Bar Kor, "and he is in a fair way to be richer than Simon, especially if you take the contracts for supplying Roman troops which you alone can get. Make him your partner. 'Tis good to have served Augustus Cæsar. There need be no betrothal as yet. The girl is young. Yet they should understand each other. In the meantime, see that he joins the Brotherhood and teach him your knowledge of men."

Simon bar Ad was in a cold still fury when he went back to Galilee. The great Passover multitude was going home. The robbers, most of whom had also been up to Jerusalem for Passover, would soon be in their caves again and dangerous. The best known of their bands was captained by a scarlet criminal called Bar Abbas. He had a magnificent hiding-place, in the wilderness of Ephron, in a labyrinth of water-worn cliffs and gullies opening out of Jordan gulf. It was an old, old secret stronghold. At the little pool fed from the seepage of the spring in his cave, Elijah, centuries before, had fasted and been fed by ravens—or robbers. The Hebrew word means both.

Simon got into touch by the simple but sufficient process of camping alone by the pool and exploring the ravines, singing. In an hour the bandit guard arrested him and he stood before Bar Abbas. Their interview

was bitter and private. When it ended Simon went free, which could only have happened at Passover, and Bar Abbas was properly bribed and instructed.

Two months later Ad bar Ad, with his son Addai bar Ad, was picked up by bandits, at twilight, just outside his own estate in Galilee, as he returned from Jerusalem.

Addai would have fought to defend his father; but that father, being wiser and an experienced old soldier, stopped him. Rapid arrangements as to ransom were made, and the old man, with his servants, was released to fulfill them, while Addai was held as hostage. The band produced horses from a near-by ravine. Then Addai, gagged and helplessly lashed to one, was swiftly transported southward like a bale of goods.

VI

Addai bar Ad was nearly insensible from cramp and weariness when, about daybreak, he was unleashed from his horse and hoisted up a rocky pathway by four men. They gave him wine and he revived. He found himself in a vast, dim, dry cavern in the rock, lighted by a long horizontal slit along one side. In front of him was a sort of stone throne on which sat a long, thick, jovial man with red beard and hair, who asked:

"Are you Addai bar Ad?"

"I am," yawned Addai; and, at the same time, made a certain signal of distress known to most Jews and many Gentiles. The man laughed.

"I see you keep your wits about you."

"It is too dark to see. I need more light."

"Bring torches," called the man. "I feel almost tempted to give you light."

Bar Ad repeated the sign, this time with appropriate words.

"We patriots who would free Jerusalem need money," the big man answered. "In this I have no choice. In all else we are reasonable—to widows' sons!"

"Then, who betrayed me?"

"Are you betrayed?" asked the big man innocently, while the robbers in the background chuckled. Before Bar Ad went to Hippos he would have flown into a rage at this, before he went to Jerusalem he would have fallen silent. Now he chuckled with them and sat down.

"I take it as granted, then," said he, "that my dear brother arranged this surprise for me. I will repay him! Did he arrange no more?"

"We brought you to extract money from your

father. We must kill you to extract more from your elder brother."

"It would be difficult to do both," smiled Bar Ad, "and I dislike to die. Have you any prejudices against either of them? Or against me?"

"Your father is an old man and a good man. Your brother is neither. We thought you a young fool, living with harlots, until this hour. Now you seem rather a calm young man."

"Then take my brother's money instead of my father's. Notify both that I am dead."

"I thought you disliked to die."

"Oh, turn me loose. Both will believe me dead because of your failure to produce me and take my father's ransom. Therefore my brother will pay. Since you must deceive one, let it be Simon."

"Why not collect both payments?"

"Because, if you are Bar Abbas, you have a reputation to sustain. If you take ransom for me and fail to release me living, you will lose more in future ransons than mine is worth. Besides——" And he repeated the sign again.

Bar Abbas chuckled.

"I might announce you dead, collect your brother's ransom in secret, later collect your father's and release you. Your brother would never dare speak. Therefore my tender reputation would not suffer."

"I have already cost the old man half his fortune. Most of the other half is deeply involved to buy me a new career. He hasn't much available. My brother's savings are the only loose money in the family."

Bar Abbas meditated a moment, then suddenly turned savage. The man had a red volcano smoldering somewhere in his soul.

"Enough of this tomfoolery. Your brother shall pay, and not the good old prince of Israel. As for you, we have our own laws. Join us, or else your head shall go to your brother."

"But—but—Bar Abbas—I, too, am a prince in Israel."

"Silence! Are you better than I? The man who lived more than a year with Greeks in Hippos is worse than any bandit. We are patriots. Join us or die."

It was a watchword. A group of perhaps fifty men were behind Bar Ad and these, at a signal from Bar Abbas, leaped up, drew their swords and shouted: "We are patriots. Join us or die." Bar Ad rose, looked around resignedly, helped himself to a sword from the nearest man, waved it and echoed their shout; and so was accepted as one of the band. His head ached from blows and he was raw in a dozen places from hanging like a bale of goods across a saddle, so he slept most of the day upon a pile of blankets in the rotunda of the cave and Bar Abbas posted a sentry over him.

The free robbers of Palestine were a national institution. People even took a wry kind of pride in them.

Three belts of bad land run north and south through Palestine; one where the mountains dip down to the coastal plain and two much worse ones where the great scarped red sides of the chasm rise out of Jordan Valley. Each of these is confused by branching side ravines. The coastal plain was lovely rich country for raiding but had only one way of escape, that to the mountains. The rolling country on the table-land, though, had wilderness on both sides and so had the wealthy Jordan Valley and the Perean district above the eastern cliffs, though no one fled east into the yellow desert if he could help. The wild Arabs of King Aretas, who infested it, were born robbers and intolerant of mere amateurs of the Oasis. Yet so conveniently was the country arranged, in long alternate strips of wilderness and densely-peopled irrigated land, that it was really hard to get far from an impregnable refuge. Bandits could leave a robber-cave at dusk, finish a raid by moonlight, and be back in the cave again long before sunrise.

Like the bandits themselves, these caves were national institutions. Whenever Israel fell into any really serious troubles, Egyptian revolts or Babylonian invasions or such-like, the survivors always took to dens and caves in the rocks. The limestone slopes were full of them; very old caves, known and inhabited since Neolithic times and improved by generations of weary slave labor.

Just above irrigation level came a line of little caves and tombs, mostly hewn out of the limestone by hand. These were full of madmen and lepers and did not count in the economy of bandits except to serve as a mask for occasional secret passages. The really important strongholds were high above them. They opened half-way up sheer overhanging cliffs, where nothing could drop down on them from above and no one, against armed opposition, could climb from below.

Toward evening Bar Ad awoke and breakfasted on bread and wine. That night the band built a fire in the cave and formally received him as a member, administering oaths. He learned that, in all, there were a hundred of them, though some were absent on expeditions.

The formal meeting over, the band settled down to a feast. This feast, to Bar Ad's amazement, was served by golden girls—lovely sullen creatures, statuesque in the firelight. The man next him explained:

"With all the caravan-trade between Egypt and Babylon to choose from, there is no need for respectable robbers to go without domestic slaves."

"These are slaves, then? How do you avoid quarrels about them among the men?"

"We keep them prisoners as well as slaves. They stay under guard in another chamber of the cave. When any man off duty wants his favorite he goes and gets her and is responsible for preventing her escape until he returns her. It is a big cave. There is plenty of room and plenty of girls."

"Poor things."

"Why so? We never take a freewoman unless she is a foreigner and a cruel mistress. The picked and trained dancing-girls from the great cities are prettier anyhow. They are kept in seclusion there and sold from one man to another. They might as well be here. After a time we sell them and steal more."

The banquet began with speeches on the liberation of Jerusalem, but degenerated into a mad riot of dancing and singing. There were no open quarrels. Bar Abbas kept too tight a leash for that. After Karis' beautiful Græco-Babylonian entertainments there was no interest in uncouth dissipation for Bar Ad.

Every Galilean boy had romantic ideas about bandits. They were false. Syrian bandits believed in catching an enemy unaware from behind and entirely at a loss. Sordid, practical, murderous efficiency, not romance, was their ideal.

It was with stark surprise, therefore, that Bar Ad found, in a few weeks, that being a bandit was not all that he had expected. Robbing merchants was not so bad. He did not mind the danger and, knowing pretty well what most of them would do with their profits if they made any, their losses did not trouble him. Robbing peasants for food and wine was something of a burden; but the bandits left money, so it was really purchase. But guarding and keeping discipline among the slaves was terrible. The bands did not all keep slaves, because slaves increase the food needed and can not be left unguarded or carried on a change of base; but when a band had so large and safe a stronghold as Bar Abbas' it gathered beautiful girls enough to keep the men contented. There was no trouble from rescuing friends because they always chose their slaves from traveling caravans; but a pretty and desperate girl, reckless and with her life for sale, needs good guard and firm discipline.

Bar Ad was sorry for those girls. An armed man stood motionless outside the locked door of their cave, except when he was called in by Sheba, the vast old woman who ruled them, to administer a whipping. Sheba was so like his old nurse Martha that Bar Ad knew all about her at once, made friends with her and ordered her about. At first he drew no one; but near the end of his second turn of guard-duty there came a screaming and Sheba called him in and locked the iron-bound door behind him.

"Whip me that girl," she rasped and pointed.

The girl in question crouched on her knees, sobbing, and tried to cover herself with her black hair.

"What has she done?"

"She disobeyed, then slapped me."

Bar Ad picked up the dusk-and-ivory culprit, carried her to the shackles which Sheba pointed out and chained her tiptoe to the wall near a torch, hands high above her head.

"Where is the whip?" he asked.

Sheba gave it. Bar Ad tucked whip and key into his girdle.

"Now," he grinned and wheedled, "now, Queen Bathsheba, I happen to want this very girl in a few minutes, when my guard is up. That's punishment enough. I can't have her crying and with her satin shoulders sore. I dare say you slapped her sufficiently for punishment. You are quite able to, you know."

"It is death for any guard to disobey me within this room."

"I know it. Therefore I do not disobey you. I only ask. Come now, please, mother, let me have her unhurt."

"Oh, get along with you."

The new guard knocked on the door just then, so Bar Ad unlocked the fetters and wrapped his cloak around the weeping girl. He took her out with him

although, after Karis' beauties, he was not attracted to her personally. When she found that it was pity and friendship and not love which made him save her, she was incredulous and, at first, displeased. Bar Ad led her to where she could see the sunshine and found her very beautiful.

"My name is Addai. What is yours?"

"Phœbe. Do you really mean to let me have a moment's modesty or do you want your cloak back?"

"No. You shall have the loan of the cloak and safety until I take you to your quarters. Tell me about yourselves in there, Phœbe. Don't wince. I shall not even touch you."

"We are picked flute and dancing-girls, captured from caravans.

"Then you are very little worse off in this bandits' cave than you would be outside in the world."

"That—that is true, Addai. It is that kind of a world for women. A score of us are draggled sullen beauties who might do better, and two or three would be wealthy ladies in their own land, but most of us are helpless, pretty, little flute-girls, and, as you say, no worse off here than elsewhere, if we could only see the sunlight. How beautiful it is."

When duty claimed Addai and he returned Phœbe to the girls' cave, she was his great admirer and, had he wished, his very willing slave. In parting she drew him inside the door of the girls' cave, stood on tiptoe and kissed him. She told the others about his gentleness. After that they competed for him. They found it restful to talk to a man modestly, without being handled. Kept in their warm cave in hipcloths, then issued into fresh air, they found the loan of his great cloak a comfort physically, as well as for all it implied. They were prisoners, helpless, and not to blame for the life they led. He said so and treated them with kindness. They responded with a passion of gratitude.

They begged so hard to be taken out by him and quarreled so over him that Sheba took to issuing them to him two or three together. The first time it happened the other bandits interfered.

"Our relations," said Bar Ad, "are purely spiritual; a thing which, having no spirit, you can not be expected to understand." And he pushed the noisiest aside.

"Staves, staves," called some one, and all came running.

A couple of quarterstaves were brought and Bar Abbas himself, hearing the shouting, sauntered up and took charge.

"Any patriot who draws sword upon another is executed," he explained. "Our little disagreements are settled with Galilean shepherd-staves, which do not kill."

Bar Ad had some experience at shepherd-staff, gained on the estate; but his opponent was an expert and would have disposed of him quickly but for one golden spitfire madcap. She rolled the cloak up, got in a scuffle with the other girl, and threw it under the man's feet, so that Bar Ad stunned him. The crowd objected. Bar Abbas silenced them.

"There never was a fair fight in the world with a woman in it," he said. "Accept the fact and hush."

Sheba was called out to explain why Bar Ad had two girls.

"It is good for the girls," she shrugged. "They get a change, a sight of sunlight, a breath of fresher air and a talk with a friend without mishandling. It puts them in a better humor and keeps them in good health."

"In that case," said Bar Abbas, "let him have three or five or seven if he like. Bar Ad, I detail you for an hour a day of escort. Girls under your protection may mingle with the men, dance, sing, run, romp and wrestle with one another, exercise and stand in the sun

without being carried off or touched, though they must not mind being stared at. If anybody wants one he must wait till they are turned in again and get her in due form from Sheba. It will be good for the girls and, if they dance and sing, good for the men too. Does everybody understand? But, Bar Ad, if you are to be responsible for them you must learn quarterstaff-play."

There was a riot in the girls' quarters when the news came back. They demanded Bar Ad, clubbed their wine and rations and got up a simple feast and an elaborate entertainment for him, old Sheba permitting and even, for a time, presiding. It was rather a bare banquet with none too much to eat until Bar Abbas, hearing of it, sent in wine, dried figs and raisins; but not Babylon itself could present more skilful singing and athletics and dancing, nor all the cities in the Empire together such hearty and affectionate good will. They posed, danced, sang, wrestled, harped, recited and did exquisite gymnastics for him, and each performer came and kissed him at the end of her act; but nobody made any speeches for him. The first girl who tried broke down and cried at the end of her first paragraph, and nobody else got so far after that.

Toward the end of the evening Bar Ad rose.

"Beauties," he called, "because I have been merciful to you, you now trust me utterly, and, hitherto, I have proved worthy of the trust. No girl who spent an hour or even a night alone with me has suffered any other treatment than I could wish my little sister, if I had one. Those who have lain helpless in my power bear me witness. Is it not true that I have spared you? Speak."

"True!" called a cream-and-honey girl from Babylon.

"It is true," nodded a pansy-eyed naiad of sea-foam and bronze.

"Trustfully true," agreed a gold and pearl.

"I tried to tempt him," complained Phœbe, shrug-

ging her ivory shoulders into her dusky hair, "in gratitude, because these shoulders are not scarred. It is most very true."

"Yet," went on Addai, "you are a charming snow-drift of beauties and I am but a man. I thrill at so much shapeliness and so much affection. If, after fair warning, I take one of you, not to protect, would that frighten you or forfeit your sure trust and confidence in me at other times?"

"No! You have earned and double-earned the right."

"Thanks, Ebony-and-snow."

"Will you give warning like this whenever you do?" tinkled a silver tongue.

"Of course, little Moon-and-midnight. I take no girl unwilling or unwarned."

"Then we will trust you just as much as ever," flashed a golden voice.

"With safety, Carmine-and-cream."

"Choose, Addai!" laughed a sunlight girl from Gaul. "And, oh, choose me."

"We're glad you are no Joseph," twinkled a graceful Egyptian.

"'Tis true, oh, Dusk-and-dawn. Let all whom I have treated with gentleness come forward. Snowbanks and roses! Are you so many?"

"Every girl into line, there," thrilled Phœbe. "Addai has treated us all with gentleness."

"But this won't do, dears," laughed Addai. "There are a hundred. Besides, I take no girl unwilling. Volunteers step forward! If I choose one I leave the other fifty, and I like all of you."

"Suppose I have them oil themselves and wrestle in pairs, then victor against victor," smiled Sheba. "You take the last."

"No, for the winner would be tired."

"Throw dice, then."

The last survivors of the bout at dice were Phœbe and a tall beauty named "Julia" who, before capture, had been a Roman lady. At the last throw Phœbe burst into tears.

"My whole week's ration for your place, Julia!" she sobbed.

"No!"

"Come, then, Domina," said Bar Ad aloud; and, to himself: "I will pretend that you are Karis."

Next day Bar Ad searched out the men who knew most about Galilean shepherd-staff and began to study its use.

"Bar Abbas" is an assumed name, meaning: "Son of his father." Most of the men therefore assumed their leader to be from some family great enough to necessitate concealing its name. Bar Abbas posed the part and showed favor to Bar Ad who, as son of a large landowner, was a real prince in Israel. The cave was full of old and wary fighters, disbanded soldiers of a dozen wars. Not caring overmuch for wine and chafing for exercise, Bar Ad spent hours each day in taking a course of arms from these with blunted weapons. One by one, he mastered every man's tricks. A bandit's life is mostly laziness, spattered with moments of furious excitement; and, for himself, Bar Ad abhorred laziness.

Ancient fencing was utterly unique. It resembled nothing else. It was bowie-knife work, done with a short-sword and a shield. A man with a butcher-knife and a cloak wrapped around his arm was the unit of ancient swordsmanship; and there were so many admirable chances for skill in the art that one man who knew how was easily a match for ten who did not. Yet Bar Ad got his real exercise with the Galilean shepherd's quarterstaff. As he improved Bar Ad was advanced rapidly to be captain of five, then of ten, then of fifty. At last, one day, Bar Abbas ordered a feast. When the band gathered that night they found all the girls serv-

ing instead of only a few. When all had eaten, Bar Abbas rose and spoke.

"Free patriots of Judea and Galilee, there is a man among us who is at once the ablest and the most gladly-obeyed of all. He knows how to please women and to command men. When we are attacked—as, some day soon, we must be—he knows how to fight. Gentiles lack proof of their descent from Adam and therefore have distinctions as to family; while every Jew can name his ancestors back to Adam himself, which confuses us when we try to decide who are princes. Still, by common consent, this man is a prince. His family is so well known that, were we taken, the rest of us would be spared or condemned according to his orders. Partly that he may take upon himself responsibility for us, but principally because he is the best man for the place, I hereby create a new position in the band, under my own but over the two captains of fifty, and appoint him to it. Can you name him?"

All the girls sprang to their feet and shrilled, before the men could speak, "Addai bar Ad!"

VII

"A LITTLE mercy is a dangerous thing," mused Bar Abbas, looking far down at a century of glittering Roman soldiers and moralizing on life in general and their discovery of his cave in particular. "Now, if I had killed you and the old man your father, this would not have happened; but I liked your looks and reverenced his gray hairs."

The Romans were gathered around Elijah's pool and had sent out a cloud of light-armed Arab scouts, King Aretas' men, who knew more about robbery than robbers themselves and from whose skilful professional examination it was hopeless to conceal the cave.

"Give me up to them now," suggested Bar Ad.

"Of what use would that be?" asked Bar Abbas, "Addai Bar Ad is reported dead. His ransom was returned to his father with word that he was killed while trying to escape. Were you to creep out now they would not believe you for an instant. You would merely be a surrendered bandit to be crucified. My correspondents in Cæsarea say that it was the quiet insistence of Ad bar Ad about his son's death which caused this expedition. Any member of the band which killed that son will perish at Roman hands—even that son himself."

"If you had letters from Cæsarea and warnings, as you mentioned, from peasants, why let yourself and us be caught in this rat-hole?"

"Because it is not a rat-hole. In due time you will see. Ah, they have found the path."

Bar Abbas withdrew his head from the crevice out of which they had watched, and the two leaders strode down to the entrance.

Rome kept the towns but left the country to be

policed by native princes. These did it very badly or not at all. Therefore bandits flourished, provided they did not get obstreperous. So long as they merely kept up their supply of wine and grain and slave-girls and took goods and money now and then from travelers, nobody did much about it; especially if they sent a fat purse sometimes to the local troop-commander. But when they grew too bold and attacked householders, Nemesis came.

Bar Abbas' band had been safer than most. Bar Abbas was no fool and had long seen that it was more profitable to rob twice as many foreign merchants and share half their goods and money with the poorest of the peasantry. Therefore he had become a local hero—a popular ideal. He often left a handful of silver or a piece of gold at some poor man's door where there had been illness or disaster; and he talked a good deal about "liberty" and "freedom" and "casting out the Romans" and took care that his men should spread the rumor. The common people of his own immediate neighborhood mostly looked on him as a benefactor and a patriot. The weeping girls in his slave-chambers could have told a different tale; but they were from a distance, and were of higher grade than peasants.

Both Addai and Bar Abbas were in heavy armor, so they moved slowly. When they reached the outer entrance, where the path came up the cliff, the active archers were in sight below. The bandits, watching with strained attention, were gathered at the path-head, under the lip of the overhang, where they could not be seen from above. Bar Abbas signed to their best bowman to loose an arrow.

As the first archer whirled downward, transfixed, a shout came from below. The others checked, then scrambled on. "Pick them off when they reach the third turn," commanded Bar Abbas and signed another robber into action. The cave was beyond bow-shot from

below, but might be reached by a long random flight from the other side of the ravine. Soon Arab archers appeared there and began to drop a few harmless shafts near the only visible bandits, the two bowmen. Most fell short. They gave it up when Bar Abbas, in full armor, stepped out and caught one of the spent arrows in his hand.

One by one the Arabians dropped from the path; but, as none were struck before they reached the third turn, they kept on coming. Twenty or more were hurt before the Roman officer below recalled them. Then there was a pause, while a couple of oxen were driven up to the pool and killed. Some of the soldiers cut them up and cooked them. Others worked swiftly and skilfully on their skins. Bar Abbas let his own men eat, then set them to rolling loose stones from the cave to the top of the path.

After eating, the archers started up again, this time with great shields of rawhide in front. These were no real protection, because boulders could be dropped through them, but they not only served as a screen from arrows but cost a bandit's life. One of the Arab archers, through a slit in the hides, put a shaft through the throat of Bar Abbas' best bowman. The bandits retorted with a shower of stones that cleared the path.

Bar Ad had found difficulty in taking this, his first real fight, seriously, because he knew he could escape, because he was on the bandits' side and because his sympathy had been with law and order and the Romans. That sympathy now veered. The man was his friend. They had shot conies together. When he smelled the blood and heard the dying man gurgle as he clawed his throat, Bar Ad felt something in himself alter to red wrath.

"He is well out of it," grinned one watching bandit to another. "We'll all be lifted up and wriggling on crosses soon. Won't the girls look pretty, crucified?"

"I'll kill as many Romans as I can before that comes," snarled the other. "I'd eat them if I could. Damn their discipline. If we went down and fought them now, fifty of them would whip the hundred of us while the other fifty sat by and laughed. Yet the whole world hates them. They are robbers just as we are. Their thirty legions together are only about a thousand times as many as our one band here. And, man for man, we are better than they are."

"All which is not quite true, but near it," soothed Bar Ad, "except the crosses. We'll kill a couple of hundred of them and live to tell it. Bar Abbas knows his business."

Bar Abbas laid a finger on his lips.

"One cat with her back to the wall can outfight four staghounds in her fury," he said. "See that you do it."

The archers had now lost some thirty men and hesitated to advance. The glittering Roman soldiers themselves, therefore, formed up and, locking their shining shields together over their heads in the formation called "Testudo—a turtle," started slowly up the path. Bar Ad looked round and was astonished at the fierceness of the bandits' faces. Bar Abbas himself looked like a great red wolf. "Now," he snarled through clenched teeth, "let us remember our comrades who were crucified."

The archers and half the century stayed on level ground. The other half came up slowly. Bar Abbas passed the whispered word to throw down small stones, no larger than a man's fist, to tempt them on, taking care not to do real harm. These stones made such a clatter on the shields that it was like gongs clanging and must have prevented any talk among the soldiers. They came up awkwardly. The path was steep, and it is hard to climb with one hand and hold a shield over one's head with the other. They passed the third turn,

then the second. The tension grew. Another fifty feet and they would be within rush of the top. Bar Ad found himself clenching his hand on his sword-hilt and whispering, "Now, now." Around him men, hidden from below, crouched behind every boulder. Then Bar Abbas shouted. Half the hillside seemed to rush down, and everything disappeared in a cloud of dust.

When the dust cleared there were no living soldiers.

Bar Abbas took off his helmet and drew back from the edge. "That will do for to-day," he said. "All we need now is a few sentinels."

"Suppose they settle to a siege?" asked Addai.

"We have grain for three months—six, if we send the girls away. There is water in the cave. But they will get their men in by some trick long before that. My rascals are orderly for bandits, but they have no real discipline."

Bar Ad thought of a crimson case or two of punishment he had seen and shuddered; then he asked:

"You speak of sending girls away. There must be a secret passage, then. Why not go with them?"

"Because, the cave being found empty, these horse-archers would spread out over the whole district and pick up all who could not reach the hills. No, the girls must go first. When they are gone, half the band must go also, then half the other half and then, at last the youngest and most able-bodied. But first we will kill many Romans."

An ivory girl flashed out of the shadows as they turned and flung her arms around Bar Ad's knees. It was Phœbe.

"Please, Bar Abbas," she called over her smooth shoulder, "Sheba says send her Addai as soon as you can, to quiet the girls. They heard a thunder and a great death-cry and have gone crazy."

"Go spend the evening with your pets, Bar Ad. Clothe them and get them ready to move. I'll send for

you if anything happens here. Get up a banquet. You may tell them what you like when once the door is locked."

"Give me the storehouse key, then, Bar Abbas."

Bar Ad, once inside the girls' quarters, disappeared to the neck in a wave of weeping women. Julia and another Roman had recognized the war-cry of the legions and started a panic by promising that everybody should be crucified except themselves.

"No Roman shall lay hand on you," shouted Bar Ad. "You shall have sunlight, a change of scene, fresh air and safety. Above all, you shall have clothing."

"Shall we have liberty?" asked two or three.

"What good would that do, you snowy wistful-eyed dryads? The Romans, if they captured you would misuse and sell you, and the country-people, if you were free and wandered over the hills, would hunt you down and do the same. This is a hard, bitter, cruel world for women. Now I want a squad of ten tall round-limbed athletes to bring food, oil, wine and clothing from the store-rooms. The rest light more torches, come down to the swimming-pool, bathe slowly and carefully, anoint yourselves with oil, dress your hair and give me such another entertainment as you gave when I won you the right to go out. Phœbe, I'll choose you this time."

The second banquet surpassed the first in everything, even in the intensity with which Bar Ad missed Karis. The girls, when the guards came for them, were a happy and chattering and well-dressed bevy. Two were missing, but no one cared. Bar Ad had connived at the concealment of the two Roman girls under piles of blankets in the pitch-dark store-rooms.

Bar Abbas was efficient. That night he sent the girls out, chained together and blindfolded, with orders to the guards to sell or free them, as opportunity offered. As they would be picked up and enslaved again by any

one who found them free, it was really kinder to sell them.

Next day the Romans lay quiet, burying their dead, and Bar Abbas divided the treasure of the band among the bandits. It was much less than Bar Ad expected; but he found that Bar Abbas had a system of simple accounts, and the men were satisfied. Bar Abbas' own share, except for a handful of loose gems and a purse of gold, had long ago gone into bills of exchange. That night half the band left, blindfolded like the slaves, with orders to scatter and reassemble at another stronghold. Next morning the Romans were ominously busy. About noon stones began to fall from above, and over the edge of the cliff came an iron-bound cage, evidently lowered from a crane. It held half a dozen legionaries in full armor, as hard to kill as lobsters.

The Romans below, reenforced by at least a century, spread out and scrambled, cheering, up the cliffs. Bar Abbas, following up the rope with his eye, ran up to their little lookout above and there reached out and cut it with a spear. The cage was dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Then the bandits, with heavy stones, drove back the glittering legionaries, but lost ten men from javelins and arrows before the attack was done.

That night half the remaining forty men left safely. Bar Abbas and Bar Ad spent the night mounting a great bolt-thrower, not unlike a cross-bow. Next day, early, a cage came down again. This time the man on the lookout could not cut the rope; for where it came to rest opposite his little window it was an iron chain. Bar Abbas and Bar Ad managed to account for the men in the cage with their bolt-thrower, but, before they died, the men in the cage cleared off the bandits at the head of the pathway and the legionaries came pouring up.

Then Bar Abbas went blood-mad. The red volcano in his soul blew up. Seizing a Galilean shepherd-staff, shod with iron at both ends against splitting, Bar Abbas

motioned back his men and rushed upon the Romans, with Bar Ad after him. Their armor protected them from javelins, and their great strength and the strangeness of their weapons confounded the legionaries. These had no idea how to meet staves, and their little short swords were inadequate anyhow.

Bar Ad had taken his fighting coolly. Now, when he found Bar Abbas and himself defending the dark cave alone against fifty Romans, he gave up hope. His dead friends, lying in golden sunlight by the path-head, seemed at peace and enviable. The little hard-shelled Romans, crusted with armor like sea-crabs, crouched and came at him, their heads overlarge and misshapen because of their helmets. He cracked head and helmet together, and each man went down only to have two take his place. Somebody flung a sword and cut his thigh. More than one javelin thumped on his breast-plate. Red flashes danced before his eyes. Breath left him. A moment more and he would have stood still, and so perished, when Bar Abbas, stumbling on a stunned man, crashed prostrate by his side. Bar Ad flung down his staff and jerked Bar Abbas to his feet. Turning, they raced down a passageway and joined the ten survivors of their men.

A few arrows out of the darkness warned the Romans to advance only slowly. Presently a clang and a shriek showed that a legionary had fallen over a cliff, and they halted for torches. Bar Abbas and his men groped to an iron-bound door, filed through it, shut and barred it and lighted torches. Then they went down and down a long passage, came to another door, unbarred, passed through and barred it after them and dropped through a hole in the low roof of a leper's den, outside of which was sunshine. Here they tore off their armor and went out one at a time, Bar Abbas first. Bar Ad had trouble with the buckles of his breastplate and then waited to see his men off, so that he was the last.

He walked out into the arms of a couple of Roman soldiers.

One of the slave-girls had made her escape from the gang and told. Not knowing which of the dens hid the passage and unwilling to enter a leper's cave anyhow, the Romans had watched from a distance the general group of caves she indicated. Seeing men issue from time to time from one of them they stole up; and caught only the last three.

That night Lucius Quintus Discurtius, the officer in command of the expedition, looked over Bar Ad and his fellow prisoners. He had rescued two Roman ladies, Flora Julia Sempronia and Cora Calpurnia, and found a store of wine and grain and valuable goods, though no money. He had enough dead bodies to crucify on the edge of the cliff for a warning, his losses implied magnificent fighting, and he was curious about the new weapon. His own helmet was cracked and his head still rang with a blow from Bar Ad's quarterstaff.

"Take these two and crucify them with the others," he said. "Kill them first, or their friends will take them down after we march away. As for this big young fellow, our rescued country-women speak well of him and he is too bonny a fighter to crucify. Send him to Sejanus as a curiosity, with my compliments, for death in the arena."

VIII

Caius Quintus Marina was an elderly thin Roman with a limp. He rose to tribune in the eleventh legion before he was wounded, and was used on detached duty, sea-command, where marching was not needed. He ordered Bar Ad up on deck from the ship's prison before the *Castor and Pollux* rolled hull-down from Cæsarea.

"Are you Addai bar Ad, the bandit?" he snapped.

"I am."

"If I strike off your chains will you swear not to kill yourself?"

"With pleasure. I find life far too interesting to die. These chains are but a passing inconvenience."

"The two ladies you saved from the slave-gang sent messages commending you to me. They say you are that Addai bar Ad to avenge whose supposed death the expedition against Bar Abbas was organized."

"I am, sir. The bandits all but killed me, then made me join them."

"Why did you not say so?"

"No one would have believed me at the cave. At best they might have sent for my brother Simon. He would have denied me. It is a family quarrel. He shall pay in full at the last. If the general had kept me at Cæsarea the ladies would have freed me. The mere accident that you sailed at once prevented my release."

"Tell your story," ordered Marina.

The Roman galley was a clumsily-efficient fighting-machine built by landsmen in a spirit of compromise, though the Greek galley was a beautiful sea-fabric. The Roman galley would have been defeated any day but

for the stubborn-fighting Romans on board her. But, when she was outsailed, out-maneuvered and her crew decimated, an enemy had to board her to take her. Then the fighting sons of the old she-wolf made fast with iron chains and took him instead.

Yet Rome was really a ferret at the throat of a great ox rather than a she-wolf. She maintained about thirty legions, two hundred thousand fighting men; and the population of the Empire was about a hundred million. With so trivial a force she could not afford to put many men afloat at once. Also, the Romans were a group of slave-holding plantation-owners. They did not like the sea. The breezy sea breeds freemen. Therefore Rome conquered, nation by nation the circle of civilizations around the Mediterranean until no hostile navies could put out. Then, under Pompey the Great, she swept the sea clean of all organized fleets of pirates and left only single pirate ships. She used it to move a little necessary summer freight, like wheat-ships, but otherwise turned her back upon it and left it nearly alone. For the winter months she left it altogether alone. From October to April the vast Mediterranean was without a sail.

Part of the necessary freight was money. Most great sums were paid by bills of exchange; but now and then some Pro-consul or Curator rebelled at quolbon to the bankers and shipped the actual gold and silver under guard. Marina had a dozen talents of gold on board and ten times that by weight of silver. His men knew of the money. Mutiny was possible. He had some picked, young, slave-girl beauties from Phœnicia as presents for Tiberius. Romans had the exaggerated European idea of the spies of the Orient. He felt that all the pirates of the East had heard of his gold. Worst of all and cause of all the rest, the stormy autumn was so near that his was the last ship out of Cæsarea. He had anxieties enough to need the diversion of Bar Ad's troubles.

"We are too crowded to give you a bed," apologized Marina, and sent for the ship's blacksmith and the chief steward.

"Strike off this man's chains," he said to the blacksmith, and to the steward: "Give this man blankets and let him sleep on the divan around the cabin. He is my guest, a prince of Palestine, here by mistake. He will go free when he sees Cæsar. Serve his meals with me."

"The ladies must have spoken very well of me indeed," deduced Bar Ad.

"They did," agreed Marina.

For a couple of days Bar Ad had no interest in meals. Half a capful of wind blew. A Roman galley was shaped like a wooden shoe sailing heel-foremost, and she rolled like one. The only sicker persons in the world than he were the poor girls in the cabin below him. When he got his sea-legs, the *Castor and Pollux* was south of Cyprus and clawing west with a stiff north breeze, while a belated Greek bireme from Antioch swept up behind her. To the north were the purple crags of Cyprus, below them the sunlit indigo-blue Mediterranean, laced with whitecaps, astern the lovely Greek galley with snowy sail and cadenced oars and a death's-head of foam at her bow.

The *Castor and Pollux* was a sixty-oared bireme; that is, she had thirty oars on a side in two rows of fifteen each. The lower oars were pulled by one man, the upper by two. There were thus ninety galley-slaves. They smelled like a cage of lions. A Roman named Boetius Severnus was their hortator. There were fifty legionaries commanded, under Marina, by Marcus Manlius Galba, a centurion. The sailing-master, with twenty-five sailors, was a keen-eyed old Carthaginian named Mallo, with a wasting sickness. Now Mallo came to Marina.

"The wind freshens," he coughed. "We can run under the lee of Cyprus."

"My orders were haste and haste and then haste. If that Greek merchantman can hold the sea, why not a Roman?"

Old Mallo shrugged his shoulders and coughed again.

The serviceable clumsy Roman bireme was like a mule chased by a horse. The Greek overtook her and foamed by, beautiful as a racing dancing-girl and swift as a white leopard and never knew the harm she had done. When she vanished ahead the purple sea was empty.

The wind stiffened and veered to the east. All that day and all that starry night and the next day and the next cloudy night the *Castor and Pollux* swept westward, making more in a forenoon than was often done in a week. Oars were laid in and the galley-slaves had holiday. Moved by bandit sympathy Bar Ad ventured among them.

"How did you come here?" he asked the nearest.

"Got into debt. My wife was ill and I borrowed money. I could not repay. My creditor sold my wife, my son and daughter and me. He bought my daughter in himself. That night both were killed. It could not be proved I did it."

"Good for you," nodded Bar Ad, and, to a second: "How about you?"

"I was a merchant. My wife was beautiful and faithful. Three other merchants, who had tried to tempt her, bought up my debts and suddenly demanded payment. Without the time to realize my credits I could not pay. They sold us both. One of them bought her and passed her on to the other two. When she got word to me, I—he died."

"Admirable," approved Bar Ad; and, to a third, "How about you?"

"The prefect of the city sent soldiers for my sister. He kept her a week and sent her home again. I killed him. I should have been crucified, but the sub-prefect

sympathized and sent me here instead. He did me no real favor."

Bar Ad turned to a fourth: "And you?"

"Rome grinds her heel upon the naked hearts of women. Her money-lenders charge one per cent. a month. Then those who can not pay are sold as slaves. How else could she get slave-girls for her rich men and slaves to man her galleys and her mines? I borrowed money to pay taxes after a bad crop. I am here; but, thank the gods, the man who loaned the money and took my wife died first!"

The silver dawn fell calm. It grew one of those lovely June days, gone astray into October, which the Greeks call "halcyon." The galley-slaves pulled again and the five Phœnician dancing-girls asked for a tub of sea-water in their cabin. Marina sent for them to come on deck. Everybody stared; for whoever chose them had picked the very flower and perfection of Phœnician beauty.

"We haven't a clean tub on board," Marina smiled. "I suppose you want it clean?"

"Yes," explained their leader, "to bathe in. We have been seasick. We are dirty and draggled. Now we feel better and want to be clean."

"If you will lay aside your clothing, beauties," promised Marina, "I will have a couple of clean buckets brought and—good heavens, what a spitfire!"

The chief dancing-girl, her eyes blazing, hissed something to the others in Phœnician. They whipped their daggers from their hair and advanced, furious, while Marina and the other Romans stepped back in amazement. Bar Ad slipped between.

"Ladies," he soothed, "ladies, the Tribune means no harm. Surely you know that it is the custom in Rome for all ladies, even the Empress herself, to bathe in public, their garments laid aside?"

"We have heard. Until now we did not believe."

"It is true. Since you are going there you must conform to that custom. Why hesitate now?"

Marina spread his hands in a quieting gesture, and explained: "There was no discourtesy intended. I will have a canvas screen stretched across the rear of the poop if you like and you may hide behind it; but then, one of you must steer the ship, acting as helmswoman."

The screen was stretched, the buckets splashed, the water dashed high. The girls made a wild frolic of it and screamed and chattered. Suddenly the screaming changed to deadly earnest. Somebody called for help. Marina dashed behind the screen. There came a shout, a heavy plunge, shriller screams and Bar Ad tore down the canvas. Marina was gone.

"The bucket jerked Astarte almost overboard," wept an excited girl, pointing. "She clung to the rail. The Tribune caught her. His foot slipped and he plunged over, dragging her with him. Now both are lost."

Bar Ad shed his tunic, tore up a seat and went overboard after a gleam of white. He found Astarte. Marina was gone. So was the dagger from Astarte's hair.

The protesting girls were herded back to their cabin, and Bar Ad and Astarte were rescued by old Mallo. It took half an hour, during which they floated clinging to the bench in the crystal-blue sea, transparent as air, Astarte in Bar Ad's arms. He found her beautiful as Karis. They made friends and talked, for Bar Ad was gentle and took no advantage; so, when the galley backed up to them and from the poop threw him a rope and a great cloak to hide Astarte, she kissed him before they drew her up. Bar Ad joined Mallo when he came aboard and then more evils of the Roman system of divided sea-captaincy became plain.

Old Mallo was for putting in to Crete. "We have too much gold on board," he said, "and the men have seen the women."

"I succeed Marina," grunted Manlius Galba. "My legionaries can hold your sailors. I command this ship."

"Nobody could hold anything if the galley-slaves only had sense enough to burst up the benches," frowned Mallo and coughed. Then, turning to Bar Ad, "What do you say? You were the Tribune's friend."

"I have no knowledge of the sea," answered Bar Ad, "but I know storms. Look at the east."

Old Mallo turned. "Too late to look for shelter now," he decided. "We must run before it."

"I like that little spitfire Astarte," leered Galba, preening himself; "but I do not think she had better live to reach Tiberius. Marina sank too quickly. There was no dagger in Astarte's hair when she came aboard."

"What fool gave slave-girls daggers?" growled Bar Ad. "Hers might have slipped out when she fell overboard."

"They begged for them very prettily at Cæsarea, when they found no older woman was coming. So it was not in her hair when you reached her, eh?"

"Galba, Marina was my friend, but I will not stand by and see a girl murdered. He was kind to her. Why should she kill him?"

"You rich men never have understood, and never will understand, the holy hatred that slaves have for Romans. As for Astarte, she was not murdered. She fell overboard after spending the night out of her cabin. Go think it over. If you perceive that this is so, you may spend the night in my cabin with us. If not—you are a bandit, sent to Rome for the arena and safest chained to a rower's bench. There is a vacancy. The man nearest the hortator died yesterday. You need not go overboard, because no one ever believes the story of a galley-slave."

Galba turned away. Bar Ad went at once to Boetius Severnus and explained and was sent to Mallo. The

storm had proved only a squall and had died to a cool stiff breeze.

"If I were you," coughed Mallo, "I *would* fall overboard. We pass to windward of a tiny island off Cythera about midnight and I will steer as close as possible."

Bar Ad went straight to the girls' cabin and warned Astarte, telling her of the island and suggesting that she come ashore with him.

"Thank you," refused Astarte. "Phœnicians take care of themselves."

A decurion with a couple of legionaries arrested Bar Ad when he came back on deck. They marched him to the slave-benches, stripped and chained him, then gave him an apologetic lash or two—but even the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. "Galba's orders," the decurion explained to Severnus. "The Jew spoke to the girls."

Because of the breeze the slaves were not rowing. They tried to sleep. Nothing happened all day and Bar Ad, meditating, twisted his burning shoulders and decided that his life was safe because he was a present to Sejanus; and that, if Galba died, Astarte's life would also be safe. Therefore he was not especially surprised when, late that night, a steward, rushing down for Severnus, called:

"Galba is dead, stabbed in his cabin. Mallo wants to consult with you."

Severnus had scarcely disappeared when some one on deck shouted, "Fire."

"I hope that vixen Astarte has not kindled us too far from the island," said Bar Ad. "They must have decided to hang her or something."

"Huh?" grunted the galley-slave next him.

"Comrades," shouted Bar Ad, "if we all stand up on our benches and pull together on our chains, we can burst the benches and save our lives from the fire."

"Done," cheered the nearest slaves.

One of the overseers had gone with Severnus. The other was swiftly caught and strangled. Then the slaves, singing a foul Latin drinking-song, pulled rhythmically on the chains. It took more than one pull and one song and the use of the short oars as levers, but at last the benches came up with a ripping crash and were smashed into fragments which could be handled. The galley-slaves swept on deck with these and the lighter oars. The top of the forecastle was in a bright blaze and the mingled soldiers and sailors were throwing water on it from buckets. Some one had overturned one of the cooks'-galley charcoal-furnaces into a sail-locker.

The soldiers left the fire to the sailors and formed up, but lost a score of men before they managed it, for they were without shields or armor. Bar Ad took a Roman sword, efficient as a hatchet, from a dead soldier, chopped off his own chains and ran aft. No one was in sight except Mallo at the helm, for the other men had run forward and the stewards were hidden.

"I can't make out my landmarks," snapped Mallo. "Con her for me. Do you see anything past the fire? Quick, before the sail catches."

Bar Ad made a funnel of his hands to shut out the glare.

"A beach on the right," he called. "A cliff on the left."

"Is there a tree on the cliff-top?"

"Yes."

"Safe," triumphed Mallo, and swung the steering-paddles with all his strength. In a few moments the *Castor and Pollux* gently took ground.

IX

"You shall not shackle him," declared Astarte.

"Who is this?" twinkled the grizzled decurion from the port Liburnian to the bluff captain of the Athenian galley. "Is she a great lady or a slave-girl."

"Both," chuckled the Athenian.

"I am Astarte, a slave-girl of Sidon, sent by Sempronius of Cæsarea to great Tiberius for his gardens at Capri. I shall find favor with Tiberius. Look at me and see. Then my good will will be worth having."

Astarte drew herself up in the perfection of absolute beauty. Her hair and eyes were midnight, her skin dawn, her shape harmonious, waist supple, hands and feet tiny, her breasts crisp and high, her dress a demure Greek stola, her features such as men die for. Yet her appeal lay in none of these nor in their sum. She radiated beauty as a lamp does light. The decurion stared at her for a long moment, laughed and saluted.

"Perhaps it may, my dear, perhaps it may," he admitted. "So, Domina, if you do not wish your lover chained——"

"Decurion, he is not my lover. I wish he were. He is my preserver. This man rescued us all, unhurt, from a burning ship, from the arms of escaped galley-slaves. He fought a dozen sailors for us at once, and won. He shared his scanty food and clothing with us. He not only saved us from others but spared us himself. We slept for a week in a stone hut on a drear island, where we had to huddle to him for warmth or die. He never hurt us. Not once. Not one of us. You must not shackle him."

The decurion took a long look at the girls, who smiled and then lined up that he might see them better. Two

were picked Phœnician sweets like Astarte, as darkly lovely but lacking her power of shedding beauty round her like a perfume. The other two were merry Galatians, gold, rosebuds and snow. The decurion turned to Bar Ad and asked: "Are you a fool or a god?"

"Neither, Decurion; only a man who has had plenty of slave-girls of his own and is willing to respect those of great Tiberius. I shall be grateful if you omit the shackles and will promise not to escape from you. Farewell, Astarte, Balkis, Arte——"

Astarte flung her arms around Bar Ad's neck and kissed him slowly and the other girls imitated her. "Farewell, Addai," sobbed each. And Astarte added: "I wish you *were* my lover."

"So this is Ostia, the seaport of Imperial Rome!" remarked Addai when the Liburnian was out of hearing of the galley. It was a bad harbor and almost empty, for the smaller ships were hauled up on shore and the larger were laid up in winter-quarters in the Tiber. Half the population was gone, moved to Rome for the winter or helping at various harvests in the country. The decurion drew his cloak around him, for the wind blew chilly.

"The Athenian says he ran in under Poridion for shelter and saw you signaling."

"True, Decurion. He was very kind and we were lucky. His was the last merchant-ship out of Athens this year. Where are the shipyards?"

"Give me the story, boy, the story!" laughed the decurion.

"Much as Astarte told it, though she exaggerated. I was captured by bandits, held prisoner, captured by legionaries, condemned to the arena by mistake and lucky not to be crucified. When I can prove identity I shall be released. The commander of the transport grew to be my friend but was lost overboard. His successor, through jealousy, sent me to the oars. That night the

transport caught fire. In terror of the flames the galley-slaves burst the benches. The soldiers unarmored because they were fighting the fire, held them off. The sailors put the fire out. In the meantime old Mallo, the sailing-master, ran her ashore in a bad harbor on Poridion.

"While most of the galley-slaves fought the soldiers, others ran back into the cabins and killed the stewards and searched for wine. I did stun a couple who burst into the girls' cabin and I towed the girls ashore clinging to a divan. It was only a hundred yards. The galley-slaves fought with clubs and oars. The soldiers had no shields, javelins or armor. When they had hunted out and killed all the galley-slaves, only four or five soldiers were left alive and they mostly with left arms broken. Then the sailors killed the soldiers and were all wounded and lost a dozen men themselves doing it."

"But why?"

"Did I not tell you? We were a treasure-ship. We carried a city's ransom in coined gold. I found a stone hut and put the girls in it. The sailors landed provisions and the gold. I stole some food and a little cover. I did not dare swim back to the ship for more, because the sharks were busy with our dead."

"What of your officers?"

"All dead but old Mallo. He joined the sailors. His sailors got drunk one day and came up to frolic with the girls. The little bare fools brought it on themselves. They had been basking out in the sunshine. The sailors were too drunk to fight, so I took an oar and chased them back. One died. Old Mallo backed me up—said that I did well except that I broke the oar. He did not want a boat-load of girls."

"What then?"

"The sailors sailed away in the ship's boat with the gold. Then a couple of wounded soldiers and a steward turned up, who had swum ashore and hidden on the

island. I could not kill wounded men or a slave to escape the arena; I will be freed as soon as I can get letters to and from Cæsarea. I guarded the girls for a week, as she said. They are pretty, but I am weary of slave-girls. Then this Athenian came by and took us off."

"Then there are witnesses to your story?"

"Oh, yes. The steward stayed aboard the Athenian, but the two legionaries went ashore this morning."

"They said some slave-girls and a bandit condemned to the arena were on board, so I was sent for you. I did not get their story."

"Get it now; and, when you have verified mine, pass word to the lanista where you send me that I shall probably be freed next April when the first ships come in from Cæsarea."

Bar Ad fell silent, for parting with the girls had set him thinking of Karis. He despised Karis. He hated Karis. Yet it was really Karis' lips he felt when Astarte kissed him, and it was the comparison with Karis, perfect in her remembered beauty, which kept him cold to slave-girls.

The greatest athletes in the world drifted to Rome, free or in chains. The supreme prizes which can be won by brawn and muscle without brains were all at Rome. Rome made her start with brawn, but, by the time the Empire triumphed, the brawn was other peoples' and Roman brains governed it.

Perhaps the brawniest brawn combined with the least brains was in the lanistæ. Old gladiators, who survived a hundred fights and became popular, got many presents of jewelry and money. When, at last, they were defeated, they sometimes received mercy. Then, if they had saved their presents, they rented an empty warehouse and set up a lanista. The government assigned them groups of captives to train, and drafted and paid for men from their schools for the great exhibitions.

Each lanista's job was to get as many men as it could assigned and furnish as few as possible to the Circus, because the longer it kept men the better it could train them. If a man did well his lanista got money and reputation and a larger share of the new men to train. The soldiers who marched Bar Ad up from Ostia showed him a hundred little favors. To the lanista to which he was assigned they gave him over with the report that he was a prince of Palestine and a spectacular fighter. They added that he was a fool, for he had lost his freedom because he would not kill the wounded.

In Latin "micare" means to glitter like mica and "dimicare," means to fight; because two men in armor, when they fight in the sunshine, glitter. Bar Ad had a great contempt for this glitter, and his own arms in the bandits' cave were always dimmed on purpose. Now he had to keep his arms shining. It annoyed him.

He had, as a basis for training, a large knowledge of fighting styles, a cheerful disposition and a total absence of fear. It did not occur to him to be afraid of men who kept their weapons shining. Such men might possibly beat him by a trick, but he was in a different class. He knew that they might kill him. Unless he rapidly made himself familiar with their style they *would* beat him. But they were not his equals.

The lanista was financed by Sejanus himself, so he got the best new men. It was run by a very large Belgian blockhead named Nark, whose thews and sinews were whipcord and steel. The sanity of the establishment was a dry, well-educated, little, hawk-faced Carthaginian named Byssus. The building was big and dim like a warehouse or a riding school. It had a pool to swim in and tier upon tier of grated cells for sleeping-places. It smelled like any gymnasium. It was organized along military lines and ran as a curious mixture of penitentiary, regiment and university, with a few neolithic elements thrown in.

Byssus matched Bar Ad with blunted swords against a great many different styles of fighters. He even gave him spear-work and a try at wrestling and boxing. At all except the wrestling and boxing Bar Ad was good, in sword-play excellent, but in nothing was he superlative. Finally Byssus gave it up and frankly asked him what the guard meant. Bar Ad told him.

"I have heard that Egyptian villagers crack each other's shaven heads with long poles," said Byssus, "but it is play, not fighting. They never kill anybody. I never heard of Galilean shepherd-staves."

"The Egyptians hardly know how," answered Bar Ad. "Our Galilean shepherds have learned more skill than they through centuries of wolf-fighting. It is a good enough weapon for wolves and I have seen it greatly puzzle full-armed swordsmen."

"How did they handle it?"

"They did not handle it. They had not time. Their enemy stretched them senseless and ran away. When they came to, with aching heads but otherwise unhurt, the fight was over."

"Show me," said Byssus.

Bar Ad tried to beg off, because a well-drubbed master returns the drubbing. Byssus would not listen. He did, however, consent to put on a helmet, to allow a light staff, and to count a tap on the head a win, even though not stunning.

When they were ready Byssus ran in, shield over head. Bar Ad hit him on the exposed left hip. Byssus dropped his shield into its proper place and Bar Ad rapped him lightly on the helmet.

"*Habet*," said Byssus, "*Mehercule*. My head rings. If that be a light blow what is a heavy one? Here, Nark, you try him."

"Give him a wooden sword, then," said Bar Ad. "Nark is so big I must hit him harder."

Nark finally beat Bar Ad by throwing away sword

and shield and catching him, quarterstaff and all, in his great arms; for Bar Ad was afraid to use the stabbing blow between the eyes with the butt-end of the staff which would have freed him—and killed Nark. The others understood, however. Even Nark himself, after they had rescued Bar Ad and both quieted down, got some conception of the case into his dim mind, for he laughed and thanked Bar Ad for sparing his front teeth.

Byssus was fascinated by the possibilities of the new weapon. One by one, he tried every man in the group against Bar Ad, thereby gaining him more than one enemy. They found the quarterstaff practically useless against a retarius with his net and trident, but no man with shield and short-sword could make head against it. Then Byssus tried two men at a time, then three, then four, then five. By five men Bar Ad was usually beaten, because he did not dare to break arms or use the side blow at the temple which kills a man if it should drive home. They contrived leather pads for the shoulders and Byssus learned to use the staff. He spent hours in perfecting tricks with Bar Ad. Nark, who could have beaten both of them together, refused to learn, since it was play and not real fighting.

Byssus made inquiry and had in half a dozen slaves from the Delta, skilled in the Egyptian version of the art. They could not stand against Bar Ad. He learned a number of leg-blows from them, though, and got some agonizing cracks on the shin. Finally, when both were ten times more skilful than was Bar Ad at first, Byssus issued an ultimatum.

"How many men in full armor do you dare to take on at once, Bar Ad?" he asked. "Five, six or seven?"

"Seven," said Bar Ad. "I took on twenty legionaries once and live to tell it—but then I ran away."

"Very well," said Byssus. "At the next games I shall send a challenge to the seven best lanistæ, saying

that I have a man who will defeat their best swordsmen with a spear, all seven together. A word to the editor of the games will get permission. They will take up the challenge eagerly, particularly if we bet a little."

"If I must fight," said Bar Ad, "and I suppose I must, I had rather fight this way than any other. Will not a spear-head destroy the balance of the staff?"

"Oh, we will fix it to come off at the first blow."

From that time on Bar Ad redoubled his practise, using a leather sack of sand and a double weight staff when not engaged with Byssus.

The gladiators' objection to the Roman people was that they demanded death. Such men as Nark and Byssus were living proofs that the arena was not always fatal; yet sentence to enter a lanista was practical sentence to death and was so regarded. The defeated men, in such a contest as Bar Ad's one against seven, would very surely be condemned to death by the people.

"Let my staff be iron-bound at both ends, so that it will not split," said Bar Ad, "and those it strikes will probably not live."

The editor of the games was stupid, but even he could see the advantage of a new spectacle. He sent down a freedman, more languidly stupid than himself, who watched Bar Ad defeat a couple of swordsmen. He bet, as directed, on Bar Ad and won. Nobody ever took bribes around lanistæ. They bet, instead, on prearranged sure things.

The freedman went home and reported that Nark had a spectacular genius. Therefore it was arranged that Byssus should have his chance; and the lanista of Nark issued the proper challenge to the other lanistæ and backed it up with every obolus the men could scrape together.

X

"Look at your seven enemies, not the mob," advised Byssus. "There they are, among the well-known men."

"I do not mind the mob," smiled Bar Ad. "I have seen greater; but I suspect it is a kindness for you to march here with me among unknown men."

"The lanista has bet too much money to let you lack a friend. Besides, I like you, lad."

Bar Ad was inured to crowds by his visits to Passover. He looked around undazzled except by much sunshine. It was far too blue and golden a day to die. He saw a very great oval field, walled by a slant of faces, a bowl whose bottom was white sand, whose sides were cruel eyes and whose roof was blue sky.

"Tiberius has to attend all the games," explained Byssus. "It bores him so he casts a shade over the proceedings."

Bar Ad laughed but, in spite of his own confidence, began to sympathize. He found himself planning to carry his fight all over the arena to make it a success and end by being killed dramatically in front of the Imperial pavilion. Oppressed by the gloom of an actor before an unsympathetic audience, he made the vast round of the arena with the procession. Then, with the other gladiators, he gave the customary stiff-armed salute before the Imperial box and helped intone the ritual greeting: "Hail, Imperial Cæsar. We who are about to die salute you." Tiberius returned the salute but went on with a conversation.

Byssus retired with Bar Ad to one of the shadowy arches under the seats opposite the Imperial pavilion and looked out through the grating. Then Bar Ad asked:

"Why must an Emperor watch us if he does not want to, Byssus?"

"Because Rome is absurdly and humorously republican. Really the rich rule, but, in theory, all Roman citizens are equal and obey only the Emperor and their elected magistrates. Every citizen has equal right to political power and to the dole and to the games; and, in the arena, Rome is still a republic."

"What is the dole, Byssus?"

"It is the ruin of Rome. The dole was originally a war measure. If the government take men as soldiers, it must feed their families. No wives and daughters sold for debt as slave-girls, for Roman legionaries. If men can find no work when they come back the government must feed the men. Sulla and, after him, Pompey and Cæsar, felt this and arranged for rations of wheat and oil to soldiers and their families. Later politicians, to win close elections, spread and increased the custom. The wheat and oil come as a tax from conquered provinces. Every Roman citizen is on the list of his ward. If he have money he feeds himself and enters politics. If not, he takes the dole. It is grain, not money. Rations of wheat and, sometimes, oil, are issued to every registered citizen who applies. For over two hundred years no Roman has gone hungry. The ration is gaged to support a fighting man and his wife and children. Single men sell the surplus for enough to pay rent and buy clothes. For two hundred years the wolf that howls at every poor man's door has not snapped at any Roman. Orators often say that the humblest Roman citizen is equal to Oriental kings.

"That is why Rome is big. All who can do so move here and become citizens. They bribe some Roman to adopt them. Roman citizens avoid marriage so as to pay rent and clothes out of the dole. If married, they have few children. Whole generations have grown up who never fought a skirmish or did a day's work and never mean to. They live in idleness and cheap immorality while the provinces perish. Being idle, they

demand government amusement. They get it. Mobs in other cities are not feared by Romans. A hundred legionaries can disperse ten thousand rioters. The mob at Rome is feared abjectly. Therefore the Emperor gives games and circuses as well as a dole. He must. The road to favor is through elective office. The mob at Rome has votes. To slight the games would be the first step toward cutting off the dole. No one would support him in it. No one dares."

Byssus talked steadily on to keep Bar Ad from thinking.

"To a Carthaginian these vast circuses seem dull," he complained. "Group-poses and dances of undraped women have no appeal for Romans. Naked mixed bathing has left no divinity in the female form for them. I have been in their baths. Praised be the man who invented clothes for women. Most women without them are hideous. The whole city knows, from personal inspection, whether every prominent woman from the Empress down is knock-kneed or bow-legged. Romans are too stupid to invent team-games of their own, like Persian polo. They can not have ship-races. The only spectacular things the poor beggars know are chariot-races and animal-acts.

"We can not horse-race and animal-act for ever. We must vary with athletics. Yet athletics are not spectacular. Two little dots, lost in the vast bottom of a bowl whose sides are a hundred thousand people, are not a spectacle. Therefore, to get a thrill out of individual athletics, Romans demand death. One of the little dots must kill the other to make things interesting; for, in these vast gatherings, nobody can see minor motions or expressions."

"That's so," agreed Bar Ad. "The faces across the arena are a blur. How did an educated man like you come to be a gladiator, Byssus?"

"Much as you did, lad. My parents died. I drank

away my patrimony. Then I killed a man, partly in self-defense. I was condemned to the galleys and, as a favor, allowed to exchange into a lanista. These people look on pairs of gladiators as we look on ants," Byssus continued: "In this they are not really cruel. They simply have no imagination because they can not see very well and are not educated. We gladiators call them bloodthirsty and blame them more than they deserve. They really do not see details. What they want is the spectacular, and they don't get it. Elsewhere audiences prefer chariot-races to other sport because chariots are big enough to see clearly at the other end of the arena. The call for death, at individual athletics here, is merely the protest of a crowd against weariness."

Byssus yawned, then paid attention, for the crowd was laughing. Proceedings had opened with sixteen wrestlers, oiled and naked, each man retiring when defeated, so that, at the end, only the victor remained. The crowd roared at the swiftness with which the beaten men scampered off.

"It is the privilege of the mob," explained Byssus, "to order the death of any defeated athlete so long as he is still in sight. Therefore they vanish."

"Tiberius was a noble general and a fashionable gentleman once," he went on. "He was one of the exquisites of his age, though foul, foul as a sewer. But he grew elderly waiting for Augustus' shoes. When Augustus died Tiberius was already too old to enjoy the Empire and too jaded from dissipation, as you must have noticed, to do anything ambitious. The intolerable pressure of the detailed business of administration almost killed him. Close on his right side sits Sejanus, with Herod of Galilee on Sejanus' other side. Herod has probably bribed Sejanus for an invitation to Capri. When Tiberius passed business to Sejanus it was disposed of promptly and, quite often, well. When

Sejanus undertook to see a thing done it was done, or somebody was crucified. Sejanus is thoroughly dishonest, vain, cruel, and as stupid as an efficient steward can ever be and still remain efficient. Keen old Tiberius knows all that. Cruelty does not occur to a Roman at all. Having no mercy he does not notice cruelty in others. As for stupidity, except as to matters of routine, it is innate in stewards. Little by little Tiberius advanced Sejanus to the care of more departments.

"Sejanus is now practical head of the Empire and curse of the world. Officially he adores Tiberius. Secretly he despises him as incompetent, as all stewards do their chiefs. Tiberius does not care in the least. What he wants is an able executive who will take work off his hands yet can not supplant him. Sometimes he uses Sejanus socially. African kings and Oriental princes like Herod turn up, whose station demands some recognition even from the Emperor. Then Tiberius invites them to Capri and orders Sejanus along to entertain them. Sejanus, being efficient, brings competent entertainers with him."

After the wrestlers came animal-acts—a fight between an elephant and a tiger and then another between two bull elephants. The death of the tiger was very successful, but the elephant-fight was slow. The crowd wearied at the delay in getting the dead elephant off the arena. Byssus was scathing on the placing of two animal-acts together.

"Byssus," commented Bar Ad, wondering, "usually you are a silent man. You never talked so much to me before, nor so wisely."

"Nor ever shall again, probably. I never had to wait with you before while you were a novice facing your first bout in the arena. As for wisdom, I have won fifty-three fights to the death, besides other contests. Therefore I am a philosopher."

A retarius came out with net and trident, to fight

with a heavy-armed swordsman. The crowd roared for swift action and was only slightly mollified by the death of both. The worried editor of the games thereupon changed his program and unexpectedly sent on Bar Ad and the seven swordsmen. They were in heavy gladiators' armor—a helmet that covered head and face, a shield, plate-armor on the right arm and shoulder, and metal shin-pieces. Bar Ad wore the dress of the shepherds of Galilee—a sheepskin and sandals.

"You have the speed of them, remember," repeated Byssus. "They can never catch you. Use footwork. The gods go with you."

Herod of Galilee was not a king, but his wealth and his descent from kings entitled him to courtesy. He bored Tiberius—most things did; but the vein of vulgarity in Herod was so completely the same as that in Sejanus that they impressed each other greatly. He was thus able to get through Sejanus an occasional audience with Tiberius, involving, of course, an invitation to Capri.

If Herod bribed Sejanus the bribe would be reported by spies to the "Fiscus," the Roman treasury department, and by the Fiscus to Tiberius. The betting habits of Roman society offered an alternative.

The ancient Roman with money had only tax-farming to gamble with. Even wheat speculation was denied him, for Rome was mostly provisioned by the government. Therefore the ancient Roman with money bet as he breathed, on everything around him. Betting was natural, respectable and unnoticed. It practically took the place of bribery.

Herod, because of Jewish prejudice, did not keep gladiators at Rome, but quarterstaff work was different. When Bar Ad came out he remarked, "That man must be from Galilee."

"He is my man," explained Sejanus. "Seven to one is a heavy handicap. Will you bet against him?"

"No," refused Herod. "If he know his business he will win. He will even come through unhurt, if he be a good man. If he do I will match a man of mine against him, if you like. An athlete of my court, a shepherd of Galilee, like this one. I brought athletes and dancers with me, as usual."

Sejanus looked speculatively at Herod. Herod was the richest man then living, with an income of ten thousand talents a year. At this visit, as at every other, he wished an invitation to dine with Tiberius. The saving thought that, if he lost this bet, Herod would have to arrange that he win another, crossed Sejanus' mind and was reflected in his face, where Herod and Tiberius both read it. Then he took out his tablets and asked:

"What will you bet?"

"Ten talents, if the match take place at Capri."

Ten talents was not too much for Herod to pay to renew his social standing among the potentates of the East. Sejanus glanced at Tiberius, who smiled. Then Sejanus nodded and wrote down the bet.

The seven swordsmen came out together from one side, Bar Ad alone from the other. Then a trumpet-blast gave the signal.

Bar Ad ran past them. Being experienced swordsmen and in heavy armor they did not try to catch him, but drew together, consulting. He circled and came back. Because of the helmets they could not see very well, but they heard him coming, formed line and crouched into the approved swordsman's attitude behind their shields. He couched his spear at the center of the line, then swerved suddenly to the right, out of reach of any sword, and stopped. They whirled, so that, for a moment, they were in a column. The nearest raised his shield. Bar Ad struck him on the hip. He lowered his shield. Bar Ad struck him on the side of the head. It sounded like a hammer on an anvil. The

man fell, his helmet crushed in. The spear-head flew off, and Bar Ad was left with an iron-shod staff of the weight and balance which he liked.

He ran a few steps, then paused again and leaned upon his staff. The six swordsmen re-formed their line, crouched and came at him. They even taunted him, seeing his spear-head gone. Bar Ad retreated slowly until he got his distance, then rushed again at the center of the line. He swerved as before, but to the left, and struck on the unprotected side of the last man, where the shoulder-armor joins the helmet. The man dropped. Bar Ad found time to sweep behind the line as they were turning and rake the end of his staff along their helmets as a boy rakes a stick along a balustrade. Here and there one of the crowd began to applaud. He circled and raked their five shields from in front. The crowd roared. He paused and leaned upon his staff again, and the whole circus rocked around him.

The five men left went wild. One of them tore off his helmet to see better, and took command. They separated and tried to surround Bar Ad. He played with them, moving from side to side until they were well scattered. Then he engaged the unhelmeted one, while the others tried to run up quickly in their heavy armor.

Now, a thrust beats a cut. Therefore the crowd were sure Bar Ad was as good as dead when he heaved up his staff. So felt the gladiator. He sprang and thrust. Bar Ad sprang back and brought down his staff on the man's extended sword-arm. His sword fell and his arm broke. Bar Ad struck on his unprotected head, with a sound like breaking a glass bottle, and the gladiator went down, apparently dead though really not much hurt. He would come to in an hour. Bar Ad leaped over him and ran out of reach just as the others converged at his back.

The four remaining swordsmen formed a wary group and came at him, a shield on each side, one in front and

one overhead. "Testudo, a testudo," shouted the multitude. Bar Ad waited until they were nearly up to him. Holding his staff by the end to keep out of reach of their sword-points, he swept at their heads. Then, as the shields rose, he raked their ankles. Though not serious, because of the metal shin-guards, the blow was agonizing. The testudo broke up. Then, in two blows, Bar Ad dropped two men whose unshielded right sides were exposed.

Up to this time Bar Ad had been in no danger at all. Now, however, one of the two survivors suddenly dropped sword and shield and sprang for the staff with his bare hands. Some rumor of Nark's conquest of Bar Ad had reached him. The movement was so sudden that Bar Ad was taken by surpise, and compelled to wrestle grimly for the staff, while the other swordsman hurried up to give the death-blow.

Bar Ad put his foot flat on his opponent's breast-armor and kicked. No human grip can resist that blow, and the gladiator reeled back, his hold broken. The other gladiator, seeing this, also dropped sword and shield and clutched, but he made the mistake of clutching Bar Ad and not the staff.

Bar Ad crushed in his visor with the stabbing blow between the eyes which frees from a grapple; then, in mercy, drove in his temple lest he recover from the first blow and be blind. It lost a necessary instant. The first man clutched the staff again from behind. Bar Ad in fury clawed hand over hand up the staff till he got his hands on the man. Both were strong but Bar Ad was the stronger. With his bare hands he bent the gladiator's head back until it snapped.

The crowd went wild. The editor of the games issued an order, a great gong sounded, and Bar Ad was crowned with roses and marched around the yellow arena while the crowd showered coins on him. Slaves dragged out the bodies of his opponents unnoticed, though only three

proved dead. The lictors halted Bar Ad at the Imperial pavilion. Tiberius himself returned his salute. Then Byssus led him away.

XI

"Byssus! Ho, Byssus."

"Be quick, boy, for I must shepherd this victor tenderly to the lanista."

"Written orders from Sejanus himself to produce Bar Ad, in good condition, in two days' time, ready to join the Imperial column to Capri. He is to fight there with one of Herod's athletes skilful at shepherd-staff."

"Good. He shall come."

Byssus rejoiced, but Bar Ad took it as sentence of death.

"This man can not but be more skilful than I," he mourned. "Don't bet your winnings on me this time, Byssus. Bet mine, though; for, if I lose, I shall not need them."

Tiberius, Sejanus and Herod went down to Capri by road. If the crowd with them had joined hands it could have reached half-way from Rome to Naples; and it was a small crowd, at that—nothing like those which followed the later emperors. Tiberius still had some germs of republican simplicity lurking here and there in his system. Byssus tramped along as Bar Ad's trainer. He was in funds from betting and wished to see the show.

In some things such Roman crowds were supreme. Their international political instinct, their cosmopolitanism, was the best in history. They originated respect for law and order. In spite of ghastly chances to the contrary, they were kinder, much kinder, to their domestic slaves than the world has ever been to paid employees or servants. Their happy-go-lucky view of life was cheerful. They were cruel; but their real defect lay in their stupidity and in what they called their cleverness—their hard, sophisticated, cynical view about

people. They all thought then as the criminal classes, the satellites of the very rich and the very rich themselves have always thought. Any experienced steward or rich man or dancing-girl in any era could give an almost complete synopsis of the classical philosophy of life.

"Talk, Byssus," begged Bar Ad gloomily, when a pinchbeck Greek philosopher and a group of negro slaves driving ox-carts had pointed him out as a victorious gladiator, "talk!"

"I was just thinking," complied Byssus, "about the magic of roads. The real and perfect magic is probably spiritual and still unknown; but next comes roads. Would you have a charm to give defeat or victory to armies and alter the world's history? Use roads. Would you ruin your enemy or gain riches beyond avarice? Use roads. Would you appear or disappear at will and own the ring of Gyges? Rule roads. Individuals like Hannibal and Alexander have always known that; but the first whole nation that ever found it out is Rome. Therefore there are many Roman eagles but only one golden milestone in the Forum; for milestones and not eagles are the right and proper symbol of the Empire of the World.

"These Romans build good roads! Ten cubits wide, paved with flat flagstones, ditched, bridged, culverted, with proper inns and post-houses! Along them tramp the legions; but, much more important, along them bump and rattle the covered carts of the merchants and the private 'carria' of ordinary citizens. The chains Rome binds the world with are her paved roads."

Byssus reported to one of Sejanus' freedmen at Rome and again at Naples. So he and Bar Ad were given a place in the graceful gilded galleys that ferried Tiberius and his guests across the bay to Capri—galleys beautiful as a dream, steered by clumsy paddles and pulled by musky galley-slaves.

"Capri," whispered Byssus as they docked, "originally meant 'Goat Island.' Therefore, when Tiberius took it for his palace, all Rome chuckled, for Tiberius is an old goat. This is the center of the spectacular, the metropolis of beautiful naked boys and girls of all the world. There is a crowd in swimming, now. Watch them scramble out to line up on the quay and salute the Emperor. Has nobody any blushes any more?"

"I have," affirmed Bar Ad. "Yet they *are* beautiful. That bronzed girl on the left of the line is supremely lovely."

The palace of Tiberius at Capri was a sprawling village of connected gardens, caves and buildings, around seven or eight different centers and on half a dozen levels. Each part was exceedingly artistic, because the best artists in the world had worked on it; but, as a whole, it was hideous, because no two parts agreed. Tiberius, however, enjoyed it. He was not now personally a very immoral man. As heir to the Empire he had once lived one of the filthiest lives in Rome, but that was long ago. Now, his own misconduct bored him. But, while not himself particularly immoral, his main pleasure in life was to watch the misbehavior of others. The wicked old Emperor filled his island with young and lovely slaves, the handsomest boys and loveliest young girls in the Empire. He arranged all sorts of secret passages and ways to watch them. He removed all chaperonage and supervision except to prevent quarrels and weed out the sick and sad. He made a few drastic rules in favor of immodesty in costume. Then he let nature take her course.

Within reasonable limits a successful gladiator can go anywhere and do anything, and rough and craggy Capri was worth seeing. Bar Ad could speak Greek and Aramaic, but he knew very little Latin; so, when Byssus settled down with a flask of wine and a friendly centurion, he started off alone.

Bar Ad was a little weary of slave-girls; in fact, the whole Roman world was. A discriminating study of female loveliness has thrills for an era when nakedness is essentially immodest, but Rome was rapidly getting beyond that stage. Besides, slave-girls could not help themselves and so did not count. Immodesty must be voluntary really to be immodest. Still, Capri was the place where the very choicest youth and beauty of the Roman Empire was concentrated and frankly on exhibition; and Bar Ad, trudging up and down its crags and vine-clad paths, walked into a dozen golden pictures any one of which would have driven a decadent Greek dramatist delirious.

Because he expected soon to die, Bar Ad moralized. Impending death is a great clearer of the intellect. He found himself sick with the filth of the Gentile world. These poor pretty children around him were slaves, not free agents, but they were not clean. He visioned a whole world like them, stretching from Seville to Samarkand, without morals and practically without religion, its gods human lusts deified. Israel's ten million was the only nation where there was moral decency and where women were chaste. Why, then, was Palestine an enslaved province instead of the ruler of the world? Because the heathen were better fighters. Why were they better fighters? Not from lack of Hebrew courage. He saw, in his mind, Bar Abbas raging among the Roman soldiers and smiled. No, the real reason was such men as his brother Simon; sexually moral, financially honest, but really avaricious self-righteous demons. It was because there were more Simons among his people than among the Romans that Rome ruled. Simon was—he would requite Simon some day—Simon was——

Here somebody clapped a little hand on his shoulder from behind, and he turned to find himself in a familiar warm snowdrift of five lovely girls, Astarte in

his arms. They all embraced him and kissed him at once. They hailed him as "preserver" and drew him into a grassy nook under an olive-tree to tell about himself. Was he really the gladiator who had made so spectacular a success in the arena? Whom did he think the most modest among them now? And, was he sure he would win to-night? Bar Ad returned the embraces, answered "Yes," "No" and "I don't know," in the proper places and asked a few questions himself.

"Has Astarte won Tiberius' favor yet? How did you find me? Do you like it here?"

"Tiberius has not even seen Astarte," twinkled Balkis. "There are so many hundreds of perfect girls here, though none so lovely as she. She will have her first chance to-night. Out of compliment to Herod we are all to go before Tiberius in a Phœnician dance."

"Get up and stand before me," ordered Bar Ad. And, when they had done so, "Turn round. Stop prancing. Stand still. Let me look at you. You seem to have lost your horror of mixed bathing—or, at least, of garments laid aside."

Astarte—spitfire Astarte—managed a blush.

"Oh, we lost that on Poridion, Addai—for you," she flashed. "But nothing matters here. After the first shock it is not so bad as it would be with one master in a small household outside. There are so many girls here that nobody pays much attention to any one. If she prove cold he turns to another."

"Is not Tiberius jealous?"

"Not in the least. All girls are ordered to amuse his guests. We were sent for because we speak Aramaic. You were pointed out to us. We were given this skin of wine and told to keep you occupied. We may do what we please till dusk."

"Who told you?"

"I do not know from whom the order came, but the mistress of our dormitory gave it. I would not drink

the wine. It is not poisoned, since we were meant to drink it too, but it may be drugged. Many of Herod's train have bet against you."

"Easily managed," smiled Bar Ad. "Dodge, as if you did not wish to kiss me."

He got up a scuffle, tripped between two of them, dropped on his knees upon the skin of wine, as if by accident, and burst it. A black slave-girl, hovering in the distance, came up and offered to bring more. Bar Ad kept her a moment because she looked like jet among pearls, but then refused, saying that he must be at his best to fight before the Emperor. Then Astarte led them up a path to a little secluded laurel-shaded glade with a tiny fountain, a bust of Pan and a pool.

"Now, Addai," she blushed. "We have the whole long afternoon before us. We will dance for you, sing for you, pose for you and tell you stories. Always, before, we have been under your protection, the property of Tiberius, and you have had to take care of us. Now Tiberius makes you a present of us all for the afternoon. You do not have to protect us from anybody—not even from yourself."

"I see that you still wear the daggers in your hair, Astarte."

Silently Astarte took the dagger from her hair, kissed it, knelt at Bar Ad's feet and laid it in his hand. One by one, the other girls did the same. Bar Ad stood with the daggers in his hand and looked at them.

"My dears," he explained at last, "my very dear dears. To-night I fight for my life with a man stronger and more skilful than myself. It is a fight where one misstep, one momentary hair's-breadth of error in eye or hand, one half-breath of inattention or weariness, means instant death."

"Give back those daggers," ordered Astarte. "Now, girls, replace them in your hair and turn the points toward Addai."

"Would you like to go and see two hundred perfect boys and girls bathing in the Blue Grotto," twinkled Balkis.

"No."

"Would you like to go see a hundred snowy girls dancing, hand in hand, around the statue of Venus Aphrodite, as they do here every afternoon?"

"No."

Astarte dimpled: "Would you, then, like to go and see——"

"No. Sit down and behave yourselves. I want to enjoy what I see now."

Bar Ad looked no farther through Capri. He spent with the girls a very pleasant and improper but perfectly moral afternoon. He turned up at twilight in the anteroom to the banquet hall, having taken nothing but a drink of water since he reached Capri.

The dinners of Tiberius were mostly held in gardens, but this was in a grotto with a floor of saffron sand and with proud purple tapestry upon the walls, although the roof was black with torch-smoke. When Bar Ad was brought in he found Sejanus, Herod and Tiberius the only three at table, although there were perhaps three hundred in the room. Before them stood a wrinkled little man, Egyptian by face but in the dress of a Greek philosopher.

"Divinity," explained this little man, "this glass is malleable."

He drew out from his belt a vase or goblet about a foot long and made of greenish glass. He had evidently shown it before, because the glass was battered out of shape, like pewter or lead. He bent it in his hands, straightened it and struck it against another goblet handed him by a slave. The second goblet broke and the pieces fell to the ground unheeded. He straightened the first again and held it up before the Emperor.

"What do you want?" yawned Tiberius.

"Honor, riches, help, the right to manufacture."

From a little group to one side a man who looked like a wolf approached and bent low, asking:

"Divinity, is it permitted to your faithful servants to speak?" Then, at a nod: "We represent the glass-blowers of the Empire. If this man make and sell a secret glass which will not break, none will buy ours. Glass-blowing is one of the great industries of the Empire. In Egypt, at Carthage, in Syria, above all, in Rome, thousands will be ruined. The tax we pay will be lost to the Fiscus, and we will starve."

Tiberius asked: "Did you not say that this glass is just like any other glass but for one little thing that you put into it?"

"Yes, Divinity," answered the inventor.

"Does any one know what that thing is?"

"No one; not even my best friend, not even my wife."

Tiberius beckoned a soldier forward and began to think out loud: "The greatest good to the greatest number. My faithful glass-blowers. If crucified you will tell; if marched to execution you will tell." Then, to the soldier: "Strike."

The philosopher's body was carried out amid the pæans of the glass-blowers and the three supreme idiots in the Empire—for Herod or Sejanus could have spoken and saved him—the three supreme idiots then in the world went on with their supper without even sense enough to bray.

By this time Bar Ad began to see that all three were drunk. Trained by the temperate Greeks of Hippos he had not at first suspected drunkenness at a banquet, nor was he sure now, for each of them was seasoned at a thousand drinking-bouts. Herod looked like a red fox, Sejanus like an overfed bulldog and Tiberius like a molting old bald-headed eagle, but all of them seemed superficially sober. However, his turn came next.

Into the open sanded space stepped a man in the summer sheepskin of the shepherds of Galilee—a dress like Bar Ad's own—but *what* a man. Bar Ad was tall but this man topped him by an inch or more and was thewed and sinewed almost like old Nark; yet Nark was an ugly old hippopotamus and this man was beautiful. If he had been a woman he would have been a sinister glorious beauty. He smiled—his smile was as ravishing as it was wicked—and bowed to the Emperor. Bar Ad, pushed forward by a slave behind him, took heart to do the same, and then the athletes faced each other. The big man grated in Aramaic:

"I am Bar Eli, the best at Herod's court. Are you Addai bar Ad of Armageddon, the dupe of Karis?"

"I am. You know her?"

"I am her lover. Now, fool who wins at shepherd-staff from those who do not know it, meet the real thing!"

The clatter and solid jarring of the staves delighted the audience. It was much more spectacular than the silent deadliness of swordsmen. Bar Ad tried to fight cautiously, but failed. Bar Eli pressed the attack too hard and knew too much about it. Therefore Bar Ad attacked savagely himself. It is the nature of the quarterstaff that the first hit usually wins. The big staff is so heavy and its leverage so long that a blow anywhere numbs, and a bruised hip or thigh or even a grazed ankle keeps the victim from guarding properly. Therefore, when Bar Ad failed to quite stop a side-cut and caught a numbing thwack upon the thigh, he gave himself up for lost. It was the beginning of the end.

Under such circumstances some men slacken effort, some redouble it. Catching the triumph in Bar Eli's eye Bar Ad redoubled his. The quick staves, pivoted in the middle and used end after end, rattled like hail on armor. Then Bar Ad stepped back—he could not spring—and staked most of his remaining strength on

a side-blow to the temple. Bar Eli saw it coming, smiled, and prepared to guard and return it with the same motion. Then, suddenly, his face flashed into blank astonishment, he failed to guard, the iron-shod end of Bar Ad's staff caught him in the temple and he went down, dead before he struck the sand. He had stepped on the jagged base of the vase broken by the old glass-blower and it had turned under his foot.

Bar Ad summoned strength enough to salute the Emperor, and Byssus led him away, panting, while the next act, Astarte's group of dancing girls, as beautiful as mountaintops above snow-level, ran out upon the floor. Astarte took time to throw her arms around Bar Ad's neck and kiss him, whispering:

"Wait for us, Addai. The spoils are to the victor."

"I wait," whispered Bar Ad. Then he said aloud to Byssus: "Leave me." This byplay was not lost on anybody. As Astarte threw herself into her dance keen old Tiberius eyed her with a new interest.

It was a very beautiful dance, called "The Death of Adonais," though it depicted nothing in particular except a group of fascinatingly lovely young girls in graceful postures. It was, however, less than half through when there came a raised voice at the door—a tortured golden voice, as much out of place before the Emperor as a fight at a solemn sacrifice. Bar Ad, midway between the grotto-entrance and the dancing-floor, could hear and see what happened at both.

A ravishingly lovely woman ran up out of the moonlight. The sentries barred her way with crossed pila.

"Fools," she cried, "I have just heard that John bar Eli has been killed at shepherd-staff before the Emperor by Addai bar Ad."

"True, lady, but you can not enter. Back."

"Double-dyed fools, I am Herod's chief dancing-girl, Karis of Hippos, the leader of this dance and late. Stand back yourselves."

"Lady, you are not costumed as a dancing-girl."

With three quick movements Karis loosened her girdle and her shoulder-brooches. Then, with one wide gesture so swift they hardly saw it, she let everything fall and stood in the doorway in dancing-dress in the perfection of her absolute beauty. The crowd between the sentries and the dancing-floor gave back at the blast of her passion. The two sentries leaped aside and saluted. The music missed a beat and then went on. Astarte and her four paused in mid-pose. Then shining Karis, perfect and unhurried, glided into the open space before the Emperor.

At first no one there, not even Bar Ad, was quite sure whether this were a planned part of the dance or real. The negro slaves removing Bar Eli's corpse had paused on the edge of the crowd of attendants to enjoy Astarte and her beauties. With one slow gesture Karis swept them into the center of the floor, where they laid down the body. For a long minute she stood and looked at it, then knelt and took the battered head upon her knees. With wit as quick as Karis' own, Astarte drew her girls into a group, then posed them in a semi-circle, with herself in the middle, facing the body and the Emperor. There she sank them to their knees, rhythmically swaying from the hips, in the conventional Greek gesture of hopeless grief.

"This is no dance," growled Sejanus. "This is real. Remove her."

"Wait," checked Herod: "She is my chief dancing-girl. She shows the mourning for Adonais."

"Hush," commanded Tiberius. "Let it be real. I prefer artless heart to heartless art."

Karis looked slowly at Tiberius, at Herod and Sejanus, then at the guards. "Bring here the murderer." Every woman in the grotto shuddered at her voice.

Before the soldiers could close hands on him Bar Ad limped forward and stood at dead Bar Eli's feet.

"Here lies the most perfect manly beauty earth has seen in this whole generation," mused Karis, "shattered like a broken potsherd. The gods had none more beautiful nor wiser in love upon this earth."

"Nor wickeder to women," ventured Bar Ad. "Karis, the fight was fair."

She kissed Bar Eli's forehead on the side unmarred, laid the head down gently and, kneeling still, looked at it, then rose and faced Bar Ad. She wiped her lips with her white hand, then stretched it out and there was blood upon the little hand.

"Addai bar Ad," she thrilled. "They tell me you are one of those walking corpses men call gladiators. For this and old times' sake I shall not work my will upon you yet, since it would be but mercy now to kill you. When you lie on the sand with all thumbs down, waiting the sword at your throat, know that, wherever I may be, I shall feel it and laugh with joy. Yet, should you live too long——"

She glided slowly toward Bar Ad. Astarte, leaping to her feet and whipping the slender dagger from her hair, sprang in between. Karis never so much as noticed her. She made no movement to protect herself but, when they were breast to firm breast, Astarte shrank aside and Karis, without looking at her, came before Bar Ad.

"Addai," she said again, "if you live too long, then——"

She darted her bare hand forward suddenly, like a snake, until the forefinger, like a snake's tongue, touched his chest. With equal swiftness Bar Ad caught the small hand.

"You strike too high, Karis," he said. "That was above the heart."

She made no effort to release herself, but nodded and mused softly: "Then, I shall see you crucified."

She turned away, signed to the slaves to bear off

Bar Eli's body, took the pins out of her glorious black hair, shook it around her for a veil and followed with bowed head and sunken shoulders, the only mourner. Astarte, with her girls, stood at respectful attention until the body was gone. Then, signing to the music to change rhythm, lovely Astarte ran up and kissed Bar Ad upon the lips. All imitated her. Then, forming a ring around him, they circled furiously, edging him toward the entrance to the grotto and so, at last, into the open moonlight where all five tried to fling themselves into his arms at once.

"Tiberius saw us go and understood," panted Astarte. "He did not stop us. Therefore he, too, thinks that to the victor belong the spoils. It is a glorious long moonlight night and you are ours, Addai, and we are yours. We are the spoils!"

"What if Bar Eli had won, spitfire?"

"You would have had five weeping mourners, Addai, and Karis would be spoils."

"Give me two girls for crutches, then," whispered Bar Ad. "And come—but first, kneel, dears, and hand me the little daggers from your hair."

XII

"Addai! Where is my boy? Addai bar Ad?"

Shalluq ran up the steps from the stave-warehouse two at a time and sent his voice before him. "Shalluq!" shouted Addai, and met him at the top of the stairs.

It was ten minutes before they quieted enough to tell Eli bar Shalmar, hovering around, who this vociferous stranger was. He almost knew without telling. He had met Shalluq years before.

"My father?" asked Bar Ad first of all. "How is the old man my father?"

"Well and almost dead from joy. We knew the truth at once by the handwriting on the letters. But why, boy, why, did you not write before?"

"I had no messenger. I had no time at Cæsarea, was in chains and had no money. For months the lanista here would not let me off and there were no ships. As soon as I could I came here to Bar Shalmar."

"How did you get off, then?"

"When I came back from Capri I was in favor. Byssus had it from the agent who had it from the steward who had it from Sejanus' favorite freedman that I had won so heavy a bet from Herod for Sejanus that something would be done for me. So he let me go where I chose, having no fear I would escape. I came to Bar Shalmar, who did not believe me, but saved me."

"Oh, I believed his story all along," laughed Bar Shalmar. "I was only testing out the boy."

The first use Bar Ad made of his new freedom had really been to find his father's principal Roman correspondent. The population of Rome in Tiberius' time

was between one and two million; and Rome did not number her houses.

The man he wanted had a warehouse at Ostia and another on the Tiber. He sold pike-staves to government arsenals. One of the drawbacks to efficiency in the ancient world was that no one knew where to find anybody unless he went to his house—and Romans had no definite breakfast-hour. Most men with business got up before daylight and visited the private homes of the men they must see. If a man once got into the city you could never locate him and had lost a day. This custom seriously affected business in political crises.

Rome had no transportation. The very rich might hire a litter, but most men walked. People crowded into towering slum-tenements. Yet in even a dense city of a million and a half it takes time to walk about. Most streets were narrow alleys, jammed with an impatient multitude. It took Bar Ad, who still spoke Latin badly, four leaves of absence to find Eli bar Shalmar's warehouse, and then Eli was out.

On his fifth visit Bar Ad was led by a skinny one-eyed slave through a big dim house where men sorted sweet-smelling pikestaves, to a little Oriental room that looked out on the Tiber. After a long wait Eli bar Shalmar came. Soldiers brought death-sentences but assassinations were done by gladiators. Bar Ad was necessarily in gladiators' dress. Bar Shalmar had done nothing for which to be assassinated, but no man to whom the Fiscus owed much money felt quite safe.

Eli bar Shalmar was fat, with a great gray beard. When Bar Ad made the salutation of peace in proper Aramaic he was so relieved that his beard wagged with anger. A year before Bar Ad would have flashed back the anger. Now he understood and laughed, then introduced himself.

He was not believed. Patiently, slowly, quietly, Bar Ad piled proof on proof. He mentioned messages, gave names and dates and descriptions, referred to bits of business transacted, wrote letters to be forwarded to Shalluq and to his father, had the handwriting compared with letters written by himself from Jerusalem, when he was his father's secretary. He built up a nearly perfect identification. At last he made the same sign of distress he had used with Bar Abbas; and still Bar Shalmar did not believe:

"That you are a Galilean of good birth," he said, combing his long beard with his fingers, "I see. That you are familiar with Ad bar Ad's business affairs I see. That you have been a bandit and are now a gladiator I can easily verify. That you are Addai bar Ad, son of my old friend, Ad bar Ad, and serving sentence for your own murder I do not see. Yet your story is not quite impossible and you are a brother of an order I know."

"Then buy me," begged Bar Ad. "Buy and employ me. Here is money. I bet upon myself in Capri what the crowd at home gave me in the arena. Sejanus will probably permit. If my story prove false you have lost nothing. If, as a wild gamble, my story should prove true——"

"You should be freed from Cæsarea."

"Seven months have passed. The Roman ladies have forgotten."

"Or by Sejanus."

"Even Byssus is deceived there."

"Come back in seven days," decided Eli.

String by string Bar Ad learned later every inquiry made and every string pulled during that week and saw the work was speedy; but, at the time, it seemed to him eternity itself. On the eighth day Eli Bar Shalmar received him in a house built as a second story on the warehouse, introduced him to his wife,

a fat, motherly, gray-haired Jewess who spoke Greek but no Aramaic, and gave him dinner in a lovely roof-garden on the rear of the warehouse overlooking the Tiber.

For dessert the one-eyed slave placed a covered dish before him. In it lay his bill of sale signed by Byssus and made by permission of Sejanus, and a certificate of manumission signed by Eli bar Shalmar. Bar Ad choked and his eyes filled:

"Friend of my father," he declared, "never was I so much your slave as now, when you have freed me."

"It must be acknowledged before a magistrate," smiled Eli. "We will do that to-day. Mother, here, will give you a room and you will begin to-morrow learning to class pikestaves."

Shalluq and Addai sat up half the first night, talking. The business ventures made by his father for Addai had prospered. There was money from the money-changing. There was more money from the growing produce-business. His father sent an investment for the pikestave trade and his prospective father-in-law, Bar Cor, another. Shalluq himself had saved money and would intrust it to Bar Shalmar if necessary. It was not yet safe for Addai to come home. After all, he really had been a bandit. He must stay a year or two in Rome, till the scandal blew over, and must try to become a Roman citizen and so become secure. The thing took days to ratify to everybody's satisfaction; but Shalluq advised a Roman adoption and, in the meantime, purchased Bar Ad a partnership in the pikestave business.

"Have you learned anything that you can put into words from your sufferings, Addai?" asked Shalluq.

"I have thought a good deal, Shalluq, since I have had time in which to think. Spiritually, I am weary. I have made a mess of life so far because my hatreds have haunted me. I hate my brother Simon, and that

beautiful she-devil Karis. I hate killings. I hate slave-girls. For a while I was lost in a mist of hate. My whole world was wrong. If I had taken Simon's malice good-naturedly I would not have then been angry with my father, nor have left home before I was ready, nor been robbed by Karis, nor served Bar Abbas, nor been exiled at Rome."

"A few great Greek philosophers and Hebrew poets," answered Shalluq, "have seen that if a thing does not start it can not go on, that fish die out of water and misfortunes die in a happy heart, and that the proper place to kill vipers is in the egg and disasters while they are still enmities in our own souls."

"I have grown more worldly-wise than in the days of Karis," reflected Addai. "Long slow talks with my father in Jerusalem about the men and women we met there and those I knew at Hippos and his analysis of their motives started it. Observation in this last stormy year has helped. Karis could not rob me now. Her mind would be an open book to me. But, now that I have a quiet room of my own and time to meditate, I see that everything is evil."

Bar Ad took Shalluq to see the lanista. Shalluq met Byssus with delight, observed the training school with distaste and won old Nark by drinking a can of beer with him and saying that he had been in Belgium. On their second visit Byssus was amused:

"A slave has been here, Bar Ad, saying that Flora Julia Sempronia, orphan of a Roman knight and just returned from Cæsarea, wants to see you."

"I saw the lady on the ship coming over," said Shalluq. "While coming up from Egypt she was captured by your bandits but rescued by the legionaries just before she was to be put in a slave-gang. Do you know her, Addai?"

"I saw her several times, quite plainly, in the cave. She seemed a pretty girl, but quiet."

"Well, go and see her now, lad, and find out why she wants you. She seemed proud, cold but courteous on board ship."

"What changes do you notice in Rome, Shalluq?"

"Rome seems more wicked, Addai. The slums are larger, more crowded and more indecent. Yet the men are weaker. There seems almost no honest fighting-material in them at all. Rome looks to be rotting at heart."

"Do you think we shall ever be rid of her?"

"We must, some day. Almost half the educated people in the world and almost all the moral ones are in our little nation. When the Messiah comes we will clean up the world. We could do it now if we had one lion-like strong man instead of a hundred viperish weak ones."

"But, will we accept him, Shalluq?"

"Of course, if we know he is Messiah. He must come soon. The time the Book of Daniel gives is past."

"How shall we know him, Shalluq, when he comes?"

"I'll answer that," said Byssus. "When any strong man comes with mercy in his heart and the love of God, and with common honesty and common sense in his brain; when any clean man comes who sets his face against this filth of world-wide prostitution yet will forgive the sinners if they live clean—then, if you don't recognize him, we will, and take him away from you."

Before going home Shalluq renewed his old knowledge of Rome. Bar Ad had never really seen the city. It was not much to see, except for size.

"What do you think of the Romans, Shalluq?" he asked on their last day together.

"They are pitched on a different key from us. They're cleaner, but they haven't enough clothes."

Shalluq was right. Emperors and patricians were splendidly dressed, but the average Roman wore a wisp of hip-cloth like that now popular among the peasantry of India. Over that came a night-shirt with a towel tied around it for a belt. If he were wealthy and went out he draped the bedding around him—at least, a garment, the toga, evolved from a blanket. Women wore garments evolved from the sheets instead, pinned on with large awkward brooches. As a result, modesty was very little related to costume. The impluvium—when the house had one—was in the middle of the reception hall and men and women used it without bathing-suits and without shame.

Most houses did not have impluvia. Shalluq took Addai up into the tenement where he had lived before Ad bar Ad employed him. Such great eight-story tenements were too big for impluvia. They were built around a central courtyard. The court was surrounded by wooden galleries. From the galleries opened a pigeons'-nest of cubby-hole rooms about ten feet by ten feet, lighted from the door. These tenements always smelled foul because they had sewers but no plumbing. The galleries made a perfect firetrap.

"In the country," said Shalluq, "houses too poor to have impluvia are one- and two-room huts of wood or stone or, more often, of mud. In Europe such houses have some furniture, not much. In Asia, Africa, Greece and Spain their furniture is a clay platform across one end for a divan, like ours. Even Greece, mistress of civilization, puts her civilization into her temples and rich men's houses only. Outside of Judea there is no free general education anywhere. Nine people out of ten in the Empire do not know how to read. Six out of ten are slaves. Over this mass of weltering poverty, immorality and ignorance of a hundred million slaves and peasants rules a free

and educated class numbering, including soldiers, less than a million men and their families.

"This does not include Palestine. Palestine is a tiny province, but our ten million are almost all educated and almost all free."

"Why, then, do we not dominate the world, Shalluq?"

"Because of our fierce internal divisions. We are incoherent. Our religious factions are like the speech of a man so angry he sputters. Our women are chaste and modest, our men tolerably moral. From sins of the flesh we are comparatively free; but our sins of the mind and soul are so intolerable that the rest of the world is really virtuous beside us. The envy, hatred, malice, pride, avarice and all uncharitableness of our factions shackle us. So much energy is taken up in internal friction that a power which ought to have conquered the world is able, when all the debts and credits are added up, to make almost no advance at all."

Next morning Shalluq departed, taking blessings with him. That sunset Bar Ad went to see Flora Julia Sempronia. To go before would have wasted half a day of Shalluq's visit.

The villa was a tiny one behind the Palatine and, therefore, miles from the Tiber, but it was a villa. A gray-haired nomenclator announced him. He strolled around the atrium, looking at statues and vases. The family was evidently wealthy. Then some one gasped, "Oh, Addai," and a beautiful young lady ran to him with outstretched hands and lifted her lips to his. Some one behind her coughed.

"And why shouldn't I, mother?" reproved Julia over her shoulder. "He saved me from the slave-gang. He hid us until the soldiers could rescue us. Think what I would be now, but for him—a sobbing slave-girl."

The lady evidently thought, for she came forward, smiling, and let Bar Ad observe her gray hair and bow over her hand, while she gave him stilted but deep thanks.

"Moreover, mother," put in Julia, "there is no question of any feeling here but gratitude. Addai is betrothed to a dear girl in his own land."

The lady Sempronia warmed at this and made it plain that she knew Addai was a prince of Galilee, a prisoner of the bandits like her daughter and, though he had been a gladiator, it was by mistake and——

"And my great fault," ended Julia for her. "Often, when I lay so ill with fever, I shuddered lest he be killed in the arena before my word could rescue him. Praise to the gods, we find him safe and free. Now leave us, mother dear, for I must tell him of Cora Calpurnia."

She led Bar Ad to a couch against the wall and sat down by him. Her manner changed.

"Mother must never know of those dreadful months in the girls' cave," she begged, "where you were the only person who was kind. I have told every one that Cora and I were locked together in a cell but not ill-treated, except that she was taken out once as punishment for anger. You see, she died—she died in Cæsarea—of—of——"

"I see," agreed Bar Ad. "I wonder that you did not have me killed to silence me."

"I thought of it," admitted Julia frankly, "but you are not that kind. Besides, you saved me. No one could have done more for me than you. Are you really betrothed? We girls felt sure you must be."

"I really am," he answered.

Julia sighed, then brightened: "After all, Addai, you are not married yet. No one can hear us here, though every one can see us; but, behind the house, there is a rose-garden."

XIII

Social standing was necessary for safety.

Even Bar Ad saw that; though he was heart-sore about Karis, and his opinion of women was low. Yet social standing was difficult for a Jew. Jews had an unalterable objection to going publicly naked. They could not enter the fashionable public baths. Therefore they were disliked, sneered at as self-righteous, and persecuted.

Bar Ad's brief term as a gladiator would have stamped him as a social outcast; but his reported favor with Sejanus redeemed all that, except with real patricians; and real patricians were already scarce at Rome. The Roman philosophy of life was rapidly disintegrating. The old Aryan inhibitions, built up, without prejudice, by centuries of experience, were more and more looked on as prejudiced insanities.

Bar Ad went fairly often to see Julia Sempronia. When he neglected it she sent and invited him to dinner. She took their friendship seriously. She made him get new clothes of which she approved. She was appallingly frank in her conversation and, in the rose-garden, appallingly kind; and, since released from the cave and given exercise, better food and sunlight, she had more than doubled in beauty.

"I was an innocent and ignorant girl before the bandits stole me," she explained once, blushing. "I am not now, as you know; but no one else knows it. It was through no fault of my own. I shall therefore behave to others exactly as an ignorant and innocent girl would. If I err, correct me."

"My dear Julia," answered Addai gravely, "no ignorant and innocent girl should let that fellow

Corvinus lean over her after dinner when her dress is pinned a trifle too low in the neck."

"My dear boy," laughed Julia, "go and lean over his sisters. Their dresses were much lower and they won't care. Will it never get through your Galilean head that, except you, every person at that dinner-table, including mother and Corvinus' mother, had watched each other that morning at the baths for an hour without any dresses on—or anything else? You probably wrong him. Most likely he was not thinking of me at all. Still, after that, if he like to look at me, why shouldn't he?"

"I can not realize it," mused Bar Ad. "I know that it is true but it means nothing to me."

"You ought to get civilized. Go to a bath and re-adjust your ideas. I love you too well, Addai, to mind it; but, really, in this you are provincial."

"You have on the same dress," said Addai. "Slip it off your shoulders and let me look at you."

"Certainly, if you like. Why not? Unpin it yourself. But, really, that's not the same. It's like having a freedman or a slave look you over. You do not frequent the baths and so are not one of us."

"There spoke the patrician, forgetting that my lineage and rank are good as hers."

"Oh, better, Addai. The daughter of a Roman knight from Gaul is not so very noble."

"Julia, is there no modesty left except in Israel?"

"There's none in Israel. Hundreds of pretty Jewesses slip away to the baths. In another sense there's plenty. We are as modest as you, or as our ancestors; but things are different. We rule the world now. We can not boggle over small things. Our modesty lies in keeping good discipline in our households, in seeing that all are warm and well fed, in divorcing one husband before we marry another and in holding the family fortune intact for—for——"

"Not for children, Julia. Half the old families in Rome have died out."

"For our poor relations, then—hateful!"

The abiding horror of Roman law-makers was that Roman women had few children. That was what really caused the fall of Rome and not the invasion of barbarians. No amount of law or punishment could help it. Therefore the Senate let any Roman adopt a son to carry on the family; for the Senate labored under the illusion that families which do not have children are worth carrying on.

The lavish folly of Bar Ad was now replaced by a calculated carefulness. He was now generous only with tips and minor expenses. His purse was no longer separated from his person. He most heartily wished to make money to justify his father's latest advances and a safe and sane manufacture of pike-staves seemed too slow. Bar Shalmar had always wanted to farm taxes. Bar Ad consulted Byssus.

The ancients never discovered alcohol. The nearest they came was Chian wine, aged in the jar until it was thick as honey. It was a light-wines-and-beer world; and it was drunk to sottishness.

Greeks were temperate. The whole Hebrew world came next, noble and peasant together. Then, in descending order, came artizans, Roman citizens, all kinds of slaves, Roman nobility, and the beer-drinking Germans and Norsemen, whose idea of Heaven was a place with plenty of fighting where you went to bed drunk every night. They did their faithful best on earth to attain their ideal of Heaven.

Byssus knew several Roman knights who had no visible children and had drunk themselves down to where they would share beer and hydromel with old Nark for lack of wine. He now adored Bar Ad because, instead of trying to drop old friends, Bar Ad still kept in touch with the lanista and exercised with

him, paying the fees. In this way he met a number of young Romans of position. Gladiators were supposed to have tricks of fencing no one else knew, so it was a fad for young Roman nobles to exercise at lanistæ. This had passed over Bar Ad's head while there. His training had been too specialized and too drastic. Now he realized their presence. Without Byssus they would have despised him as an ex-gladiator. With Byssus to explain his story and insist that he was sentenced by mistake, was a prince of Palestine and had the good will of Sejanus, they accepted him.

The weariest was named Cassius Marianus. Though no older than Bar Ad, his soul was worn out; but, like the rest of the world, he came to a gymnasium when he needed a savior. His comrade, Canubius Orgetorix, was a plain fool, a tall handsome Gaul cursed with just sense enough to lose his soul. There was also a beautiful Roman boy with a sprained mind, a would-be sculptor who obeyed the second commandment. His friend was a wealthy Roman painter of the kind who, in mercy, is left unhanged. There were other decadents, including a senator who looked like a satyr and talked like one. There were, also, some quiet efficient men who fenced hard and kept their mouths shut—the strength of Rome. They filled Bar Ad with despair; for, as long as such men lasted, Rome would rule. He met all these. Byssus assigned him to them as a fencing-partner. Yet Byssus advised him to cultivate the crazy kind, as more in favor with women.

Bar Ad, by fencing with them, came to drink with them and found them tanks. After exercise most took a cup of wine which their slaves passed them; so Bar Ad borrowed a slave-boy and a skin of old Falernian from Bar Shalmar. Finally, two or three got friendly enough to take him home with them—to houses full of slave-girls.

The Roman equestrian order at first consisted of everybody who had a horse but was not important enough to come to town-meeting. Later, its requirements always involved money enough to keep a horse and buy armor and lack of social influence to become a senator. The equestrian order was thus a sort of consolation prize for second-rate social aspirants with money.

As Rome conquered the world the order gathered to itself one solid privilege. Only a Roman knight could farm taxes.

The ancients had sense about many things. They fought the ablest and neatest wars, they wrote the best epics and lyrics, carved the best statues and built the most artistic temples. Their political cosmopolitanism held the world superbly unified for five hundred years. Earth reached its most perfect peace in Rome under the Antonines. But the ancients were poverty stricken, and their crowning stupidity was taxes.

If Cæsar had set a thousand intelligent persons for a year to invent the very worst method of taxation possible, the result would probably not have been so bad as the one the Romans muddled into. Somewhere in its mysterious depths the Fiscus arranged for competitive bids on taxation. Only Roman knights could bid. The man who won paid the Fiscus cash down and sold the right to collect taxes, at an advance, province by province, to other Roman knights. These sold it district by district, to others, who sold it, city by city, to natives of the province, who sold it, ward by ward, to publicans. Everybody gouged and bribed, everybody cheated, everybody was extortionate. The Roman soldiers punished provincials who did not pay, and the common people usually gave up four or five times as much as the government got.

Since money in Rome was made by farming taxes,

Bar Ad cast about for some way to begin bidding. That he was a Jew and had been a bandit and gladiator did not particularly hurt him unless somebody mentioned it in the Senate. He could do anything he liked if he remained inconspicuous.

"Provided you find just the man you want, what will you give me?" asked Byssus one day.

"A quarter of the difference between what he asks and what he takes," laughed Bar Ad.

"Then come—and bring your wine-bearer."

Byssus led Bar Ad into the bear's den with a door on the street where old Nark had his private quarters. Nark was there, of course, upon a couch; and Nark was drinking. On another couch was another man; a heavy man, as old as Nark and nearly as big.

"Most excellent Lucius Minucius," announced Byssus, "here is Bar Ad, that prince of Palestine of whom I spoke."

Minucius was grossly fat and purple-nosed from drinking, but he had eyes. "I have heard well of you, young sir," he said. "The young men have accepted you and drink with you. Old Nark, here, wanted me to meet you sooner. He says that you are a good lad who, if I like you and you me, will keep us in wine until we die of it. It will be a long time. Both of us, as you see, were born under a full moon."

"I have wine with me."

"Produce it, lad, produce it. Victims of Venus! If all the rest be half as good as this we shall endure each other. Byssus said it was the best in the fish-market."

"Fish-market?"

"Yes, the citizens out there who have their souls for sale. I sell only my name—having sold everything else inherited from ancestors. I am a Roman knight, lad. In me you see the majesty of the Republic; gone slightly seedy, maybe, but still legal."

"Do you mean you will adopt me?"

"I like your wine, I like your looks, and I must needs have more drams than scruples."

"What is your price?"

"As much wine as I want. A decent lodging for life. A slave to wait on me—no, a freedman. When I was thirsty I sold my last slave. A villa, a very little villa on the hills—no. I sold my villa—a decent house in Rome, rent-free, and some small steady income; in short, a lien on destiny."

"You could not use a house, sir, and in a country villa you would die of missing the city. I will find out the cost of a couple or three good rooms, a freedman to wait on you, enough wine for four men a day, clothes in moderation and two denarii a day pocket-money, add them together and give it all to you."

"Not in money, lad, not in money. I am too old to be honest, even with myself, and do not ask for a lump sum. Maintenance, maintenance for life, is what I want. Let only the spending-pieces be in money."

"So be it. I will consult my partner, make due inquiry and arrangements and go before a magistrate with you, meeting you here to-morrow."

"Victims of Venus, lad, leave your wine behind and set about it. You would delay a snail."

It took longer than one day; but, eventually, Lucius Minucius was settled within staggering distance of old Nark, and Bar Ad became a Roman citizen.

XIV

As adopted son of Lucius Minucius, Bar Ad bargained better than he knew. Byssus himself had no idea how popular the old knight was. Minucius became surprisingly presentable when bathed, well-dressed, and neither too sober nor too drunk. He took Bar Ad to see several ancient flames whom he had dropped in his adversity. Three of them had, at various times, divorced him. Most of the rest were divorced, and so, they said, were most of the other ladies in Rome. Minucius made no secret of his bargain with Bar Ad.

"The boy," he explained, "is a good boy, not rich, although a prince of the Jews, but comfortable. He sometimes works. We like each other. He takes good care of me. I had to adopt or marry—and what is marriage? It is a thing you see in the desert, beautiful from a distance but, too often, gone when you get there. Domina, I present my son, Lucius Curius Thaddeus."

Bar Ad found that the expense of a little nobility was not great. There were plenty of seedy representatives of noble families. The time needed, however, was considerable. He had to go to entertainments when he should have been working in the warehouse. Bar Shalmar said, "Keep on." Their road to fortune lay along that line. Bar Ad had already attended several tax-auctions at the Fiscus. At first he came away without bidding, laughing and saying that, among these dolphins, he was but a minnow. But he learned how it was done and who the big men were. Then he scraped together enough to buy the taxes of a little district in Pannonia, which he knew nothing about and had never heard of, but chose because it was cheap. At the resale

he made a hundred thousand sestertia. This excited Bar Shalmar as a taste of blood maddens a tiger. Bidding was done after private agreement among the brokers. A man would say: "I have half enough cash to bid in next year's taxes for Sardinia. If I do, how much will you give me for the northernmost of its ten districts?" As long as Bar Ad confined himself to answering such questions, he was a help to the larger men, and tolerated. Should he bid against them he would be a rival and be crushed. He could not get this clearly into Bar Shalmar's mind and had to hold him back by a combination of force and diplomacy, while he increased the size of his operations slowly.

Bar Shalmar had no petty vices. His ruling passion was greed. Next after drink Minucius' ruling passion was society. Drunk he was stupid, sober he was sour, but when just pleasantly jingled he became an elderly but witty old beau.

Bar Ad's ruling passion was to pay back money borrowed from his father. He always thought of himself, when that was done, as going back to marry Miriam and settle down on her estate.

Minucius should have died of overdrinking, but did not. He rather improved in health. He insisted that Bar Ad use one of his rooms; and they soon took a tiny house together, about the smallest that could be had with an atrium. They kept three or four slaves and gave a little dinner now and then. Bar Ad's growing profits with the taxes made this possible and Bar Shalmar, urged by dreams of whole talents made by tax-farming, saw that the social side was essential and fully approved.

The first little dinner was given to Julia Sempronia and her mother. Minucius found that he had met the mother years before. They had so much to say to each other that Julia and Addai had a comfortable talk.

"A bachelor's den, Addai," sighed Julia, looking round. "When are you going home to be married?"

"A year or two—when I have made enough to pay my debts."

"The girl who waited on the table is pretty."

"Minucius chose her. I'm done with slave-girls, Julia. Love is not love when it can be enforced with lashes."

"You lashed me, once, Addai."

"I did not; but, if you fib like that, I wish I had."

"I almost wish so too! Addai, you think that I am bold. I'm not. I'm really modest. Other girls are bolder. Mother, may I invite Lucius Curius Thaddeus to come and see me to-morrow while the Corvina ladies are there and you are gone to Aunt Julia's? They say they'd like to meet him again."

"If you like, Julia. Do not interrupt. Minucius knew your father."

"What is your slave-girl's name, Addai?"

"Nanno."

"She never takes her eyes off you. She blushes when you speak. When she leaned over to serve you she brushed her wrist against your hair. I do not like it."

"Then change the subject, Julia," smiled Bar Ad.

"What is this silver vase, Addai?"

"Read the incription."

" 'To Addai bar Ad, for bravery on the ship *Castor and Pollux* from—from Tiberius Imperator!' Why, Addai!"

"A long story. I will tell it to-morrow. It means that a dancing-girl called Astarte has found favor with Tiberius."

Next day Julia, with Marcia and Flavia Corvina, received Bar Ad. They were very haughty until they dismissed the slaves and lay on couches under the grape-vines in the rose-garden, with wine-cups. Then they demanded and got the story of Astarte.

"A dancing-girl," envied Marcia, "and now persuading the Emperor to send gifts! Nothing ever

happens to us. You got caught by bandits, Julia, but they released you."

She filled her cup with wine again and emptied it.

"Yes," smiled Julia. "They locked me in a cell and nothing happened; for"—here she made a face at Bar Ad—"just before they meant to sell me as a slave, Addai, here, stole me out and hid me and then the soldiers came. Addai has never been so kind since. Addai, though, is provincial. He thinks our public bathing is adventurous enough. Tell him about it. Let me fill your cups."

"Oh, that? That's dull as ditch-water. To be sure, we may watch the men, but they must never see us. It is enough to make one envy one's own slave-girls."

"How so, Flavia? I have never been to the baths."

"Why, Addai, any man caught looking at a woman is put out. It simply is not done. They notice us no more than if we were trees. Of course, most women there are old and hideous, but really, truly, we three are not. A slave-girl is not free, but, at least, she gets looked at. Her beauty is admired. Men may see that she is lovely. Calpurnia Chloria gave a dinner the other day, where all the dancing-girls were Roman ladies, masked; and none of the men knew it. Then she sent in real dancing-girls, masked, and then the ladies again; and nobody would have known the difference if one of the ladies had not told."

"That seems to me—er—startling," remarked Bar Ad.

"Why so?" yawned Marcia. "You are provincial. Every man there had seen every woman there a hundred times. Why be modest about it? The only difference was that it was in a villa instead of in a bath; and so the men could really look at the ladies and, thinking them dancing-girls, could compare them and touch them. Calpurnia makes a new marriage out of it. A little more wine, Julia."

"Sejanus," contributed Flavia, "gives dinners where they do away with slave-girls altogether. The ladies who are his guests wait on the men. We were invited to one once, but were out of town."

"Would you have gone?" asked Bar Ad.

"Why not? Every one does. It is no more than an afternoon at the baths. Refusal would anger Sejanus. Acceptance would have meant a pleasant afternoon and the probable promotion of our brother. How hot *this* afternoon is! Marcia, you're asleep!"

"Never mind; let her sleep, Flavia. The wine was strong. Addai here does not believe that we two are really more beautiful than the old women at the baths," teased Julia. "He is provincial, very! He was quite shocked the other day when both my shoulder-brooches came unpinned at once."

"Why, that? That's nothing!" fluted Flavia, reaching up and unpinning both hers. "It is really very hot. Wake, Marcia! Imitate me, Julia! Look at the shocked expression on Addai's face! Have you never seen a woman so before, Addai?"

"Addai," laughed Julia, "Flavia is a dimpled, camila-skinned, little, dusky beauty, and I am long, round-limbed, cream-and-gold—since I bleached my hair; but you are so provincial that I think you had better pin up our brooches—oh, certainly, embrace us. We don't mind—then, when the embraces are done, help Flavia and Marcia into the house,—and then go home; but first upset the wine."

"None beautiful as Karis," Bar Ad muttered.

"What's that, Addai?"

"I won't."

"Oh, well, in that case, let Marcia sleep—she has drunk too much to know what's going on—and don't upset the wine."

"Julia," challenged Flavia, "in a clump of bushes at the bottom of our garden there is a little artificial grotto,

having a tiny pool and fountain and a statue and altar to Pan. It has a soft sand floor and is so cool and pleasant and retired that brother sometimes goes there for a nap, with our prettiest slave-girl to fan him. Many villas have such little grottos. Has yours?"

"Ask Addai."

Addai looked closely at Flavia, then glanced questioningly at Julia. Julia shrugged her shoulders and nodded.

"It has," admitted Addai, "half-sunk in the ground behind those rose-bushes. There is a tiny fountain falling into a basin before a shrine to Venus, with a statue. Shall we three leave the lady Marcia to her siesta and spend an hour there?"

"Two hours," dimpled Flavia.

Some of the men at the lanistæ invited Addai to dinners, which he returned. Their dinners were dull. More attention was given to the food and wine than among Greeks, and everybody gorged; but the entertainment, while costly and improper, was not clever. Bar Ad asked questions about Roman morals and politics but got, from the solid men, only a profound sense of Roman confidence. The human curiosities he sometimes dined with translated it into boastfulness. They were of no more importance than aphis on an oak-leaf; but they did manage to convey to him an impression of the Roman Commonwealth bound together into efficiency by submitting to discipline. Art, accounts, music, drama, religion, education, were all details and left to slaves. War, government and commissariat were real. When a man undertook these he obeyed orders or died. Even the human insects who spoke had, most of them, served their turn in a legion and obeyed orders, or they could not have lived to tell it. In this, all Rome was welded together like a sword in one man's hand. The Emperor was dictator. What he said was done, however ridicu-

lous; for thus, and thus only, could that supreme solidarity be maintained which made Rome easily superior to all the world.

Bar Ad thought of the envies, jealousies and factions of his own land and sighed; for now he knew why Rome ruled. Then he pictured Palestine solid, disciplined, in one man's hand, the red glare of faction changed to the white light of religious zeal, and he thrilled. It could be done. If the Messiah came it could be done. Then these ignorant immoral Roman swine, who ended every banquet carried home drunk by slaves, would lose the world.

He outlined his discoveries to Bar Shalmar, next day, when he should have been inspecting pikestaves.

"These Romans have no morals," he declared, walking to and fro in their private room. "No morals except in one thing. They have no religion except in one thing. They have no decency, they have no art, they have no education, they have no learning, except in one thing—and they learned that thing not by brains but by centuries of hard knocks, fighting with all the world. They have no real families, no love, no honor, except in one thing. Centuries of war have shown them the difference between superfluities and the essential. They have the proud humility of discipline—obedience to their Imperator. I thought them slaves, fools, parasites. They are not. They care nothing for the man. They laugh at old Tiberius and call him 'Billy-goat,' yet cut their best friend's throat or their own at his orders. A proud obedience to the state—to the Emperor as representative of the state—that is their art, their religion, their morals and their sense. It is enough, for it has conquered the world."

"All the same," asserted Bar Shalmar, "there is one God; and, besides, I will not take orders from the Zealots or the Pharisees."

"Nor they from you," groaned Bar Ad. "Nor they

from you. Oh, for a man, a very lion of the tribe of Judah, to take our people and weld them into one with the iron hand of discipline, even though he cemented our union with our blood."

Old Lucius Minucius, when the great discovery was put before him, lay back and laughed.

"Son," he chuckled, "you have at last learned the difference between a savage and a civilized man. Oh, yes, I know that in all the arts Romans are savages. Every Greek grasshopper from Persia to the Pillars calls us barbarians, and so does every Egyptian and every Jew. We have no art, no science and not much joy of living; and, in my own lifetime, religion and morals and family-life have disappeared. But we have set our souls upon the secret of success; and that is discipline. Obey the Imperator. You're right that the man does not matter. Tiberius is an old satyr and Sejanus, who acts for him, is worse than—nothing. Yet, if Tiberius or if Sejanus, acting for him, ordered my murder, I'd beat them to it, open my own veins first and die laughing, not out of fear that they would kill me, but for the state. The two best generals in the world or the ten best can not command an army. Hannibal taught us that; but the whole state set, like a willing sword, in one man's hand, hews down the world. Every province, Spain, Greece, Carthage, Egypt, each talks of independence and will never reach it because it won't agree within itself. Your own Jerusalem is the most faction-ridden city of the world. Rome's religion is to do what we like except in one essential—obedience. Victims of Venus! It is the one only true religion; for it has overcome the world."

XV

Bar Ad spent seven months at the lanista; and stayed four years in Rome. Julia gave him up, and married and divorced Corvinus. In the third year a letter wrapped around a dagger was smuggled through to him from Capri, in which Balkis said that, when Tiberius tired of Astarte, the curator of the slave-girls took her for himself. Next morning both were dead. That stormy spirit had found rest.

Bar Ad drank a little now and then and grew more urgent about money-making.

"There's no real reason why you should stay here," urged Byssus at last. "Go home. Your position as a Roman knight will protect you."

"I want to see my father, Byssus; but I want to see him with cash in hand to stop the mouth of my elder brother. Meanwhile, I am making money fast and am comfortable here."

"Meanwhile the prince, your father, is growing old, and the young girl you are to marry must be impatient. Have you no letters calling you back?"

"Yes. I answered that I would have the full money in one more year."

"There's no reason why you should not go now. In a few months the profits from your wife's estate would repay what you still owe your elder brother. You grow hard, Lucius Thaddeus; you grow worldly and hard."

"No other man in all the world would say that to me, Byssus."

"No other man in all the world would take the trouble. When you came here, green as an unripe melon, I helped you all I could and rejoiced as you grew

worldly-wise and your fortune mended. Sometimes, now, lad, I wish that you were greener."

"Another year, another year, Byssus. Perhaps only another six months. I must leave Lucius Minucius provided for."

"Take care of him out of the produce of your estate. Go soon, lad, for old men die and the gods smite young men negligent of parents. They petrify them."

This conversation was still working in Bar Ad's heart when one day in early spring, as he sat over a charcoal brazier dictating letters, there came a sudden rush of hasty sandals and Shalluq burst into the room, followed by a protesting nomenclator. Bar Ad looked and felt as if he had seen a ghost.

"What is it, Shalluq," he gasped, leaping up. "I thought you were in the temple at Jerusalem." Then, as he read Shalluq's face: "My father. Is he dead?"

"Not yet. Not yet. The hand of Azrael was laid upon him, but the sturdy old prince shook it off for love of you. One side of him is smitten, one leg and arm, but he himself is very much alive and calls for Addai."

"O God of Israel, preserve him. Forgive and speed me. How did you get here, Shalluq? Is the sea open yet?"

"On the first ship, bribed to sail two weeks ahead of time. A voyage like a miracle for speed."

Bar Ad took a long silent minute to arrange his plans, then spoke.

"Nomenclator, go look for Lucius Minucius. Bring him to the warehouse. Stenographer, hurry ahead. Make sure Bar Shalmar does not leave. Are you worn out, Shalluq? How did you come?"

"By ship to Ostia, by horse from there, and lost three days around the boot of Italy. Your quickest way is horseback to Tarentum, from there to Alexandria and so up the coast; but I am too old for hasty galloping."

While Shalluq took bread and wine Bar Ad gave order for the necessary equipment for a journey, then hurried with him to Bar Shalmar's warehouse. Old Lucius Minucius was there before them, from drinking with old Nark, and had brought Byssus with him. The four old men agreed Bar Ad must go. The fifth old man back in Galilee had the best right to him. Byssus swung the verdict that way, and Minucius, who would miss him most, agreed surprisingly.

"Though I shall probably never see him again," he mourned, "the lad should marry and settle down. He has been a gift of the gods to me and should be so to others. Victims of Venus, but I shall miss him!"

Bar Ad arranged the continuance of Minucius' allowances, advised him to marry Julia's mother and asked Byssus to keep an eye on him. He left Shalluq to follow when rested. He arranged for letters, left a memorandum of farewell to friends, took all the money that could be spared without crippling Bar Shalmar and set out before noon on post-horses for Tarentum.

He had no time for thought in horseback-riding but galloped as long as he could and slept like a log at night. On shipboard, though, he thought. He even prayed—a thing he had not done for years.

He found a ship direct for Cæsarea and quick passage. He used the time on shipboard to take out his old hatreds and review them as he had done once on his release from slavery. The troubles of his life had all come from hatred, even this last trouble. It was subconscious hatred of his brother Simon which hardened him into money-making at Rome while his father grew old alone. Yet, how can one help hating that which is hateful?

He saw his personal experience as that of the world. All nations hated Rome and were deteriorating from that hatred; but they hated their internal enemies worse. The only unifying element in all the world

seemed now the Roman love of the Commonwealth personified in the Emperor; and Rome herself was also rapidly deteriorating. When Rome broke—then chaos. The one hope of the world seemed the coming of some great person who could assuage the internal hatreds of the Jews, since little Palestine, with its ten million, held key to the freedom of the earth. God grant Messiah come before Rome breaks. God grant Bar Ad come before his father dies.

At Cæsarea Bar Ad used money and his privileges as a Roman knight, got horses swiftly and galloped to Armageddon. He tore up to the house door with a Roman orderly behind him. The servants were new, and, in his Roman dress, nobody recognized him. Bar Ad gave swift orders to bring the master. In a few moments Simon came running out, followed by Miriam, in a married-woman's veil. The eye of hate is keen as that of love. Both knew him.

"Addai," shouted Simon and embraced him, shedding a few crocodile tears on one shoulder while Miriam took the other: "Oh, Addai!"

"My father," asked Addai, "oh, quick! The good old man, our father?"

The two released themselves and Simon pointed to the tomb, hewn in the rock at the foot of the garden, and bowed his head. Addai paused, then turned to Miriam:

"When were you married, Miriam? Is it to Simon?"

"A week ago. We all grow older, Addai. You did not come."

Then Addai bowed his head.

Addai was amazed to find the world empty. He had always had a father. Now he had none. He had spent so long a time away from that father that he did not really believe he would greatly miss him; but love has no such law. Something inside himself, far deeper and far wiser than his mind, felt orphaned and cried out dumbly.

Addai had a week of quiet in which to renew old impressions and stand in meditation, an hour or two each day, outside his father's tomb. Simon insisted on his staying at the house. Addai hardly noticed Miriam. He thought he loved her, once. He was mistaken. It was only a little of his love for his father spreading out her way.

Yet Simon, most unjustly, conceived a jealousy of Addai which, on top of his other hatred, made him practically insane. He could not very well refuse his brother a seat at his table and a bed in his house, but he grudged him a look at his wife. Seeing this, Addai would again have gone away; but Simon detained him angrily, and Addai was too downcast and indifferent to disobey.

"Stay a little," Simon snarled. "Stay ten days—stay till Passover. There will be news from Rome."

Ten days after Addai's arrival a courier rode up to the house from Cæsarea, saddle-weary. He was closeted half an hour with Simon, who then called Addai in. Simon was beaming greasily.

"Addai," he sneered, "you are in danger. You must hide."

"How so?"

"Lucius Minucius has cast you off and denounced you as an enemy of the State and no longer his son."

"There must be some mistake. The old man would not do that."

"Here are his letters."

Addai opened the letter. It was on Egyptian papyrus, folded and sealed.

"To Addai Bar Ad, of Armageddon in Galilee, Greeting:

"I disinherit you and cast you off. I cancel my adoption and revoke my name. You are to me as one dead. When you are arrested by a Roman guard you

will be beheaded at my request, even if your captors could wish to spare you for your many crimes against the Empire.

"LUCIUS CURIUS MINUCIUS."

"But why?" asked Addai. "Why? Why?"

"Tell him, Jabez," gloated Simon.

"Long before the old prince sent for Shalluq, in order to send Shalluq to Rome, Simon Bar Ad had sent me there, by land. An intelligent man with a little money may effect much. It took me weeks to make the proper connections; for Simon told me to involve no one else, if possible, for fear of consequences. When Shalluq came and you left, I was ready. It might have taken months but Bar Shalmar, moved by too much greed, at once bid in the taxes of Cappadocia in Addai's name, defeating men close to Sejanus. I told the knights that, for years, Addai Bar Ad had falsely traded on a supposed kindness Sejenus felt for him. Sejanus felt no such kindness. For a small price one of his freedmen laid the case before him and he said so. He also said it was a shame that a bandit who had sat upon the benches as a galley-slave and fought as gladiator in the arena, should disgrace the honorable order of Roman knighthood. Minucius saved himself by pleading it was the supposed good will of Sejanus which led him to adopt you. He demanded and received all money of yours from Bar Shalmar, gave half to Sejanus' freedmen, and revoked the adoption. By the same plea Bar Shalmar saved himself; and by surrendering the contract for Cappadocia to a syndicate of knights and paying to them the difference between his and the next bid. Shalluq disappeared. You had already gone. Byssus was too unimportant to be hurt. I therefore carried out my instructions successfully."

"Well done," said Addai. "Oh, faithful servant." Then, to Simon: "You did this. Why?"

Then Simon, little, fat, insignificant, was transformed. He swelled and towered.

"You do not remember our mother, Addai," he began. "I do. She put me off her lap to take you on. You were her idol. As we grew older the servants, all but one or two, loved you and hated me. They used to whisper in corners that it was a pity you were not the elder. You lounged and loafed and laughed while I worked. Our father tried to be just, but could not. I worked and slaved and toiled and served him well, and you took the portion of goods which came to you and wasted it on harlots. When you came back he fell upon your neck and kissed you. All that he had belonged to me. He said so. He took of those things that belonged to me and risked them to build a new career for you. Then, while I served him still, you turned from his name, took adoption from a Roman, and stayed from home for gold—making money with my money. He slowly died for sight of you. The girl you were to marry became a laughing-stock. Yet, for his sake, I could do nothing. Then he died. My hands are free. All my life you have done evil and received good, while I have done well and seen you preferred before me. Jacob, supplanter, unfaithful, ingrate to the woman who trusted you, avaricious, gladiator, bandit, galley-slave, parricide, at last, at last, full justice shall be done!"

"Why tell me this, dear brother, whom I shall reward?"

"Why should you any longer do evil and be loved while I do good and am hated?"

"Because you are hateful, Simon. Why tell me this?"

"No blow is perfect until we know from whom it comes. I made it sudden. This morning you were a Roman and a rich man. What are you now?"

"Apparently an outlaw trying very hard to keep his hands off a scoundrel for his father's sake."

"Do nothing for his sake. Coward, you always were the stronger. Now kill me if you can. You killed him."

Addai glanced at Jabez and found him standing close behind with a knife drawn. Addai siezed his wrist, struck him, not too hard, on the chin, and took the knife. Simon screamed out in terror, turned and ran.

What Addai would have done had nothing happened, he never knew; but the sound of heavy galloping and the ominous clank of armor came from outside and a hoarse Roman voice shouted a Latin reply to Simon's scream. Betrayed by wrath, Simon had spoken just too soon; too soon by five minutes.

Addai looked out. He tore down a curtain-pole he had seen put up some fifteen years before and knew. Rushing out of the front door he attacked the decurion; then, as seven of the ten troopers leaped to take him, turned and ran. The door, slammed in their faces, gave him a moment's grace. He ran through the house and circled round it. He must have a horse, or horsemen in the fields would overtake him easily. The three horse-holders, each embarrassed with the bridles of three horses, could not defend themselves when he rushed out at them. He swept them down with the pole. He leaped on the best horse, scattered the others, and rode away through the orchards on his old trail to the mountain-top.

The bruised soldiers caught their frightened horses, discovered that no one was really hurt and galloped after him. He was already out of sight. They saw him again beyond the orchards, but only as a distant mounted figure high on the pasture-land above irrigation-level. He rode to the foot of a crag, waved them farewell, threw his horse's bridle over a splinter of stone and vanished into a broken slope of rocks and brambles where no horseman, and no footman in armor, could hope to follow.

XVI

PALESTINE was very small. Passover crowds were vast. The result was congested roads.

Hundreds of thousands trudged from the south and other hundreds of thousands from the seacoast; but the millions came from the north and east and reached Jerusalem through Jericho. When they had passed there was nothing to eat and the very roads themselves were ruined, but, during their march, there was perfect concealment for everybody.

Bar Ad disappeared into this Passover mob like a frog into water. The vast crowds of Rome went round and round in one place. In time, a man might be found in them. These marching multitudes were vaster and they kept going.

They were orderly. Every man was armed, either by sword or with the long Galilean staff. All had money. Many escorted wives and daughters; good girls, as refreshing to Bar Ad's eyes as water to the desert, for they were modest. Therefore the men would tolerate no disorder. Roman crowds, as a whole, left everything to the police. This multitude was different. The motive was religious. Roads must be safe for women and children. The methods were practical and prompt. Even the bandits stopped robbing at Passover and mostly became religious pilgrims.

Bar Ad went down the long stairway of hills to Jordan at night. Next morning he bought a sword, a cloak, a razor and a staff and crossed the river at Bethabara. There he scraped acquaintance with a group of youngsters from near Nain, clean-minded beardless boys, and made himself their guide and story-teller. He thought it well to have a body-guard.

At the stone bridge over Jordan, outside Jericho, the publican who sat at the receipt of custom had Roman soldiers to enforce his orders. By the decurion stood one of Simon's servants. Yet Simon had overreached himself. Lest the old servants should favor Addai he had sent a new man who did not know him but stared him in the face with dull and fish-like eyes, one of which then faintly contracted. Evidently Simon had failed to offer a reward and had vented some of his wrath on his household.

Jordan Valley was an irrigated paradise half-way up its sides, and great Jerusalem was the stupendous city of the hills. For a circle of a Sabbath-day's journey around Jerusalem the Passover pilgrims camped. They filled every vacant space, orchard, roadside, field, park and lawn, except walled and locked gardens.

Camping-places were taken, first come first served. It was a shameful thing to take money for them, or for the loan of courtyards or guest-rooms for Passover supper. Camping was under arbors made of vine-prunings. For three miles from the city walls, aqueducts and fountains made water available everywhere.

The first need of a great crowd is sanitation. This crowd had neither plumbing nor pestilence. The methods used may be read in the Book of the Law and were enforced by the death-penalty. The next is order. This crowd policed itself. The next is food and fuel. It bought them in Jerusalem. A thousand years of habit had trained the nation so that Hebrews in bulk were the best campers in the world.

Bar Ad and his boys settled not far from Bethany, off the main road, near the crest of the hill, close to water. Then they bought poles and vine-branches—Passover was vine-pruning time—and made an arbor. They only needed shade. It never rained at Passover. Every one had ordinary clothing, a knife, a long Galilean cloak rolled over the shoulders and used for a

blanket at night, and a flexible woven-grass basket, like a haversack, slung from the belt and used for a pillow. What would not go into the haversack he did without. Many had staves. When the booth was built, most of Bar Ad's boys lay down for a luxurious rest. Two or three chose to stroll with Bar Ad through the great camp toward Jerusalem.

It was a camp of millions. It held many girls: good girls, frank, modest, equipped much like the boys and with pure faces. There was no leering and the boys made no comments on the girls. Bar Ad felt as if he had come back to Heaven. From the crest of the hill, in one direction, he could see all Jordan chasm; in the other was a sea of booths from which rose orchards and houses. In the middle was Jerusalem.

Bar Ad felt a sudden rush of national pride. "Here," he said to the boys, "is an army, already mobilized, ten times as great as all of Cæsar's legions, encamped about an impregnable fortress and made up of half the educated free men in the world. A little drill, the right man at the head, and we could own that world. God is with us. The temple, as a visible sign, flames in the westering sun."

The temple brought thought of Shalluq, and Bar Ad's troubles closed down on him like clouds. Shalluq had disappeared. Unless he came to his money-changer's table in the court of the temple Bar Ad, at least, would never see him again. Bar Ad almost ran down-hill, into the Valley of the Shadow of Death and up the other side. The young men took it for religious zeal and followed.

Jerusalem was crowded. Streets were narrow tunnel-like alleys just wide enough for two loaded camels and arched over every few feet with runways and balconies. These were the main streets. The side streets were just wide enough for one loaded camel. Through these cramped arteries, which five men abreast congested,

a crowd of two hundred thousand flowed down and out from the temple, where they had attended the evening sacrifice at three o'clock. Bar Ad lost his boys here. It took a long time to reach the temple court against the current. Some of the money-changers had already folded up their portable tables and had gone. Shalluq's place was half-way up the left side. Bar Ad could have wept and shouted when, pushing through to it, he found Shalluq.

Shalluq put finger on lip, set an assistant in charge of his money-changing and led the way to the top floor of a decent tenement-house in the lower city.

"My Lord Addai," he warned, "both our lives hang by a hair."

"Mine does; but why should yours, Shalluq?"

"You are denounced, the old charge of banditry reopened, your moneys in Bar Shalmar's hands divided between Minucius and Sejanus' freedmen and Shalmar turned against you. Your brother Simon did it, through Bar Shalmar's greedy contempt of your advice on bidding."

"I am glad you escaped and no harm came to Byssus."

"Old Minucius thinks kindly of you and says, secretly, that if you come back before he drinks the money up, what's left is yours."

"Victims of Venus! Good Minucius!"

"I am watched by Simon's servants and by a spy of Herod. Their hope of laying hands on you is through me. If you are caught or killed, I am destroyed, for then they will rob me."

"Then I must not be caught or killed. How shall I see you again?"

"Do not come here. I shall give up this room. I change lodgings often. Until your beard is grown it is unsafe to visit the temple. Do you need money?"

"The contrary. Take these drafts from Bar Shal-

mar—you saw them given. See if you can collect them. Lend me your reed and inkhorn. Now, which way shall we go?"

"Up. Over the roofs and down into the next alley."

In the enormous mob around Jerusalem, Bar Ad felt safe as one drop of water in the Sea of Galilee. Lodging cost nothing, for he lived in the booth, even after the boys left; but when the Passover multitudes were gone he went up to the temple.

The great paved outer court was no longer crowded, for it could hold two hundred thousand. Shalluq's table—Bar Ad's table—had very few around it. Shalluq bristled with excitement.

"My Lord Addai," he said, "why this imprudence? I am watched."

"Shalluq, my life is for sale to any one who cares less for his own. Give me a little money—mine is gone—and word of where to find you later."

"Where do you go, my Lord?"

"East and then north, Shalluq. All my life I have taken silently what Simon gave me, until he riots in a sense of safety. It is time to strike back."

"How?"

"I don't yet know, but hard."

"Addai, I love you and I despise Simon. But Simon is my master's elder son, married, head of the family, some day to have a child, my master's only grandson. If you strike back I must protect Simon and his son."

For a long time they looked each other in the eye and the poor remnants of Bar Ad's world crumbled. At last he said:

"Is there no unswerving affection anywhere? Give me what money you can."

Bar Ad went away; poisoned, at last, by self-pity. Simon had always been against him. Karis had robbed him. His father died and left him. Bar Shalmar and Minucius had sacrificed him to save themselves; but

Shalluq, good Shalluq, had always been his friend. Now Shalluq, too, had turned against him.

Bar Ad's small preparations included a solid meal and a look at the old town-house, now Simon's, where he had lived with his father. It was afternoon when he started down to Jericho. He passed the inn at irrigation-level, below Bethany, and plunged out of the sterile hills into a paradise. Stone walls hedged in the road, but there were cross-lanes leading between vineyards and through watered orchards. Over the walls hung fruit-trees. The walls themselves were tapestried with climbing roses. Nothing is quite so full of birds as irrigated country. They sang in every tree. Passover is blossom-time in the hills. There was the sweet smell of growing things and of the good green grass; and water hushed and tinkled everywhere in irrigation-brooks.

Bar Ad reviewed and discarded plans to hurt Simon. He did not care to kill. An arrow out of the bushes or a quick knife-thrust would do that. He wanted to destroy yet leave him living. The easiest way would be to kidnap him and collect ransom.

To chuckle over this and to elaborate the details Bar Ad sat down upon a grassy roadside bank and a man came up and passed him. It was dusk now. The man was Galilean and looked at Bar Ad closely as he passed. The steady procession of travelers that made the road to Jericho as public as a city street by day had ceased at sunset. The two were alone, except for a group turning into a by-lane ahead and a couple just visible behind.

The man halted, then turned and walked back. Bar Ad rose, shifted his haversack and gripped his staff. The man laughed and showed both hands, empty.

"I watched you for half a mile, until it grew too dark," he said: "trying to remember where I last saw that lilting walk and those great shoulders. It was when I slipped through the secret passage in Bar Abbas' cave four years ago. Are you not Addai bar Ad?"

"And, if I were, would I be fool enough to say so?"

"Why not, to one who fought that day behind you? It is a hard world without honest robbers cheating each other. We shall come late to Jericho, must go through the Needle's Eye postern and should hurry, lest thieves rob bandits."

The man's name was Bar Kaleph, Kaleph the One-Eyed, as Bar Ad dimly remembered. He chatted rather pleasantly, saying that he had been frightened and turned honest, but that Bar Abbas drew the band together in another stronghold and was prosperous as ever. He kidnapped no more Galilean princes, though, not he! He waited till the lady Karis of Herod's court paid high to have them killed; and she waited until they lost their money—and their fathers.

At this, Bar Ad struck. He should have stabbed. Kaleph the One-Eyed squealed like a rabbit and ran in under the descending staff, knife-foremost. Yet he, too, was confused by the darkness, and struck a shade too high. Bar Ad smote with his fist and he rolled away in a ball, still squealing. The two wayfarers behind ran up, and the cross-lane on the right began to pour out fighting men, each with his cloak rolled round one arm and his knife out. Bar Ad darted and struck and struck and struck, reducing his assailants by three. Then the wayfarers arrived, flourishing staves. They attacked Bar Ad.

Bar Ad had felt at ease against a dozen with cloak and sword; but when staff jarred staff his heart sank. He disposed of one staff-man with a clever overcut and stunned a creeping knife-man with the end, spear-fashion; but he was out of condition and losing blood, so that he was more weary from that one swift rally than after a long hard bout at the lanista. Worse, some one picked up the staff, so that he still had two staff-men to contend with. Some one also picked up the knives of the four knife-men and began throwing; for,

when he ceased pressing the staff-fighters for an instant, a knife whizzed by and clanged on the stone wall. He began to feel that this blind worry in the dark must be the end. His life flashed by him in pictures as he fought. His brother hated him without a cause. Karis had made a fool of him—here he broke the ankle of another staff-man. He loved his father yet had twice dishonored that father's name, fouling and then discarding it—here he flattened a man creeping up to get a thrown knife. Better have died in the cave, refusing to join robbers. He had never had a fair chance. Even Shalluq—old Shalluq—had betrayed him—here he leaped sideways, rushed into the group of swordsmen and out again and broke somebody's arm. Was this from Simon direct, or through Shalluq? He put his back against the wall, swung his staff to keep the knife-men off, and asked. Then, from the ground across the road, came up the muffled voice of Kaleph the One-Eyed.

"Shalluq and Simon nothing! This is from Karis. She gives a third more pay if you die knowing it. Take that, you devil."

A knife whizzed through the air, low down and pierced his calf. He tore it out and sent it back and some one yelped. He ought to rush, but he was growing dizzy. Then the oddly-muffled voice began again:

"That last one hit him. He has another through his lungs, over his heart. Make a half-circle round him, out of reach, and let the crazy lion bleed to death—oh, my poor grinders."

Another knife whizzed by and missed him. Bar Ad gathered his swaying faculties and sprang, snarling. One man went down before him, then another. A knife from some one on the ground pierced his thigh. He floored another man in front of him, then met the solid jarring of staff on staff. Then, from behind, the other staff crashed down, and his day ended.

XVII

Bar Ad was tougher than he thought. He woke again in this world, not in the next. He was bruised, beaten, gashed, sore, parched with thirst, but not yet dying.

It was rose-dawn. He lay in the clay of a shallow ditch by the road. Some one had robbed him of his cloak, his robe and girdle, and rolled him out of the way of passers-by; thus saving his life by pressing cloth and clay on his worst wounds. By day the road was full, but not at dawn. He dragged his wet hand across his lips and got his voice again.

Later, the first of the day's wayfarers sidled by; a wizened Levite of the temple. Bar Ad called him.

The Levite changed his scorn of Bar Ad's supposed drunkenness to terror, looked right and left for bandits, then passed carefully by on the other side. He was going up to the temple and might be fined and punished if delayed. He was ritually clean and might be forced to purify himself if he touched a dying man. Also, he was afraid. Bar Ad groaned.

The next was a fat priest in white linen. Many priests and Levites lived in Jericho and it was time for a new shift or "course" to go on duty at the temple. Bar Ad called out again and the priest halted. He was more intelligent than the Levite, for he was not afraid. He even came a step or two toward Bar Ad as he examined him intently. Then he shrugged, muttered something about "uncleanness," gathered his robes and passed.

Bar Ad had half forgotten the law of ritual uncleanness. The Pharisees had worked out a caste-system based on "baptizings"—ceremonial religious purifica-

tions with water. Galileans usually neglected it, so Pharisees called them "Am-ha-aretz—The Great Unwashed." This priest was purified to offer sacrifice to the God of mercy. Bar Ad might die and welcome, before he soiled the ritual and synthetic holiness of that artificial purity.

The third man also came up-hill, from under the sun-gold sky toward Jerusalem. He was a Samaritan, astride a white donkey, and his contempt for Pharisaic purifications was greater than Bar Ad's own. He halted the donkey, surveyed Bar Ad, remarked, "Tut, tut," got off and hauled him out of the ditch and said "Tut, tut," again, for Bar Ad fainted. He cleansed the wounds, poured in oil and wine and bandaged them with clean linen torn from his own garment. Bar Ad came to and got a drink of wine. Then the Samaritan hoisted him on the donkey and took him along up-hill to the inn below Bethany.

The inns of Palestine were masonry sheds, like the casemates of a fort, built around a dusty square. They were free public camping-grounds, owned by the government. Caretakers sold wood and settled quarrels. In Passover-time they were packed, but now, with ordinary traffic, there was room. The Samaritan bought straw and laid Bar Ad on it in a corner under an archway. Then he gave the caretaker money to feed and look after him and promised more, if necessary, when he came back.

The caretaker gave Bar Ad hot soup twice and several drinks of wine. Bar Ad was weak, not always conscious, and drowsed away the time. A Roman would have watched the campers, but water does not seem wet to fishes nor the Orient amusing to Orientals.

After a day and night the Samaritan came back, eastbound—an unmistakable man, little, lean, kind-eyed and hawk-faced. He redressed Bar Ad's wounds, tut-tutting.

"You're hardly strong enough to move," he complained, "but you'll die if you stay here. There's only one place to put a wounded man without money this side of Samaria. You Hebrews have no mercy on each other."

"You saved me once, Samaritan. Spare me now. I am wanted by the Romans as a galley-slave, for a crime I did not commit."

"I thought those scourge-scars on your shoulders looked Roman. Well, lad, you will be safer from the Romans in the sands of Parthia, and men will nurse you there and cure your wounds."

While he talked the little Samaritan worked. Now he hoisted Bar Ad bodily on the donkey. He had already fed him soup and wine and given the inn-keeper a tongue-lashing for not redressing the wounds.

"Pest take that inn-keeper," he went on. "I paid him well. What is your name?"

"Bar Ad."

"Mine is Marcus Marcellus Murio."

"A Roman citizen? I thought you a Samaritan."

"I am both; also a serving-brother of the Nazarites."

"Why, they are stricter than the Pharisees who call Samaritans 'Shomromi—Devilkins.' "

"True. Yet I am a serving-brother of the Nazarites, as you will see."

The little man began a monologue on Nazarites which lasted hours. Out of sheer gratitude for life, Bar Ad listened. The Schools of the Prophets of David's time were Nazarites. Nazarites took a vow before a priest to serve God, drink no wine and let their hair grow. A million people in Palestine were Nazarites for thirty or sixty days. Better Nazarites took longer vows. There were fifty thousand such, who stayed at home. True Nazarites went out into the desert. The desert marks a man. True Nazarites changed under it like metal under a blow-pipe.

Here Bar Ad, being still weak, fainted or fell asleep. When he woke they had reached Jordan flat and turned south along the marly western beach of the Dead Sea. Marcus Marcellus Murio was still in full eruption.

There were a thousand Nazarites in twenty communities. They were affiliated with the four thousand Essenes in some intricate way which Bar Ad lost. They were a branch of that order to which Bar Ad belonged; or, as Murio preferred to put it, that order was a branch of them. Bar Ad called halt and proved himself a brother of the order. Murio gave him another drink of wine and then was moved to fresh enthusiasms. The Nazarites had wonderful affiliations. They kept in touch with the Samaritans. They knew the mysteries of all religions. The Magi of Persia, the wisdom of Egypt, the initiations of Mithra, the resurrection of Adonais, the secrets of Samothrace, the Druids of——

Bar Ad dozed off. He was immensely grateful to the kindly little man and delighted, after so many cynics, to meet anybody bubbling with enthusiasm; but he could not keep awake.

He was restored by Murio's silence and the scrambling of the donkey up a steep gray ravine in the Judean escarpment over the Dead Sea. Climbing reopened one of his wounds. It was through mists of pain that he finally saw a wild hawk-face half-way up a cliff-side, and heard a challenge to which Murio answered: "Affiliated brothers of the order." Some one came down and led the donkey up a path and Bar Ad was eased on to a pallet in a cave, where he lost consciousness under a group of keen thin faces.

It took him months to get well. The wound, which reopened, closed; but he was beaten over the head as well as stabbed in a dozen places, and fever returned.

The master of the school—Nazarites called their caves "schools"—was his principal nurse. Murio looked in about once a month. Bar Ad enjoyed Murio.

The master, Malachi, was old. His vast white beard covered his chest. His gray hair would have reached his feet if it had not been plaited and coiled, turban-wise, around his head. He went bare to the waist and was lean as a lizard from fasting; but he was clean, bathing daily, and the greatest pleasure his men could give him was fresh yucca, soap-weed, for washing his beard and hair.

The cave was near the top of a great bastion in the Judean hills. It had another opening that looked out over the angry-blue Dead Sea. The limestone formation of Palestine abounds in such strongholds; usually with a spring in them whose water, dissolving the limestone, made the cave.

As Bar Ad grew stronger he moved his pallet to this window for air and sunlight and the crystal-clear vast view. He knew about Nazarites, or thought he did. They were long, lean, leather-girdled, silent men, clad in camels'-hair and armed with staves, who stood on street-corners at Jerusalem during great feasts and glared at passers-by; not for show, but because they really despised them. These Nazarites were different. They were desert-dried, it was true, and wore around their waists camels'-hair cloth and leather slings with which they could hit a Roman soldier in the face at fifty yards; but they were gentle, and Murio was garrulous.

Malachi chuckled and stroked his great beard, for Bar Ad, questioned, had opened his mind.

"Murio is really a Nazarite and really a Samaritan. He can be both because he is really a Jew; a proselyte of the porch. He is also really a priest of upper Egypt and an initiate into the mysteries of Samothrace. As for his talk, he uses words as the little cuttle-fish of Joppa use ink—to hide in. He will talk quite frankly and truthfully for an hour and tell you nothing."

"Are Nazarites really so powerful as he says?"

"Oh, quite; but differently. We have the affiliations

which he claims, and more; but our real power lies in fasting and in prayer, and therefore in the peace of God."

"Could you punish my brother Simon for me, and restore my fortune?"

"I have no doubt we could, in time; but your Roman fortune came from farming taxes. That's blood-money, wrung from the dying. My son, he who is a publican in Rome and on a large scale is none the less a publican."

"My money-changing, then. You may take the money."

"There's something wrong with money-changing in the temple. We do not want such money. Your produce-business is clean. I will have inquiry made there."

"But I must punish Simon. It is a duty!"

"Your brother Simon, leave to God. He has lived all his life in hatred, in anger and in self-pity. They make a poison round him."

"My master, Malachi, you know my story. Is that your judgment? Do you mean our passions are poisons—that some one watches and punishes——?"

"Oh, no. There speaks self-pity. Some One watches and saves, as far as we will let Him. As for our passions, they punish themselves, like—yes, like poisons."

"Why, 'tis what, in moments of enlightenment, I have half seen before."

"We teach our neophytes by what each knows already."

"I am no neophyte."

"At heart you are. Provided you learn wisdom and find peace it makes small difference whether you take our degree."

Bar Ad, ill and with nothing else to do, spent long clear days in meditation. He reviewed his past life and saw how it was poisoned by his passions. There was no reason to go back. Shalluq, through Murio, sent a de-

lighted message; but Shalluq's loyalty was, after all and rightly, toward Simon's son. Every one else Bar Ad had ever loved was dead or turned against him. After the great shock of his ruin and after Malachi's teaching he did not even hate anybody enough to hurt them. His life was as ended as if he really had been murdered by the robbers.

Rome did not appeal. The only thing worth doing with a new life is something new. The newest was to watch for the Messiah's coming and, meanwhile, learn to subdue all passions. The messengers who came and the business which Malachi disposed of at his bedside, showed that these Nazarites kept in keen touch with all the Oasis. They felt as he did. The world had come to the dividing of times. Its one hope lay in Messiah's coming before Rome broke. He questioned Malachi.

"Our advices are that the Messiah is in the world already. We watch that we may know at once when He declares himself."

"Advices, Malachi? From whom?"

"From Daniel and the prophets; and from other more modern sources open only to initiates."

Bar Ad digested this and silently offered his life to God, for Israel. From that day he was at peace and so got better. When he was well, at the feast of Dedication in the winter, he tramped up to Jerusalem with Murio, told Shalluq he would not hurt Simon for the present, offered sin-offering and took vows as a Nazarite for a year, before a priest in the temple. His beard and hair were already long.

Returning, he received three months' intensive instruction, coupled with outdoor exercise gathering food for the school. When he was able to support himself anywhere in the wilderness old Malachi asked:

"My son, you look and live like us. Are you one of us?"

"My life is God's to serve Messiah. Is that best done with you?"

"I think so, son. Our vows do not interfere with your duty to God, your country, your family or yourself. We hold men by their inclinations, not their vows. Should you get no further forward you are free to leave and, if you like, to marry. With these assurances will you proceed?"

"My other life is ended, sir. I will."

That night, in the torch-lighted rotunda of the cave, Bar Ad was made a Nazarite of the schools, having been made a Nazarite first in his heart and next before God's altar in the temple. The dignified and stately ritual was an act of worship.

Next day he received a leather bag of parched locust-meal mixed with honey and Malachi himself guided him to a cave in the rock, near a spring, looking out over the yellow desert beyond Perea. There Malachi left him, to stay a month if he could. He said in parting:

"The sandy desert is like a refiner's furnace. It wears through the flesh of a solitary fasting man and lets the thing he is inside shine out. What it makes of a man depends on what he starts with; but, for better or for worse, it makes him many times more than he was."

City Jews knew a little of the wonders wrought by fasting and by sex-repression caused from without by circumstance, but lacking inward purity of heart. They did not know what happens when the repression comes by prayer and for the love of God, from real purity of heart, from within. One has to go a bit along that path even to know the path is there; or else, one must learn from Him who agrees that religion interlocks with sex-repression but puts it better, saying: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Bar Ad was anything but pure in heart. The filth of all the ancient world had swept through him. Yet he was forgiven and at peace. He had confessed his sins to God, closed up his life and come out to the dry places seeking health, though not of body.

The spotted leopardess that lives in such caves came out, yawned, stretched, and lay down in the shade. She watched through green-slitted eyes, head on paws, hoping. She could no longer touch him. They now belonged to different worlds. Should he forget and be afraid, even so little as to shrink from her, then she could touch him. He had gone out that morning a mile to water, bathed, drunk, come back to take up vigil and was still panting from the climb. Therefore the demon who visits desert caves was able to show himself, since the veil of the flesh wore thin. Both leopard and demon seemed edged with rainbows, for he was far spent and the heart still pounded in him.

"Hail, madman! You see visions."

"Hail, evil! You are no visions. You are real. Yet I have learned already that you belong to a different universe. Fed men who look at you see nothing."

"You dream while waking. Therefore you are mad."

"Saner than ever before; only, I see both worlds. I am but new at this and have scant power, though I can summon help; but I have learned already one mouthful of this food in my haversack would banish you."

"Eat, then."

"And take a week to fast back to this stage? Not so."

"But if we are your own imagination wakened through fasting, why——?"

" 'Tis true that my imagination supplies your forms; but you are Lust and Panic and so are real. You walk through the dry places seeking rest and finding none. No rest abideth in you. So I, who seek eternal rest, do no such bidding."

"Eternal rest? Have you come here to die?"

"No, but to flee from death-in-life; to sense God in the solitude; to hear God in the silence; to draw near my Maker in the open He has made; and so, to live."

"If any wander in the wilderness and stay there

long enough he goes mad. We two are your insanities. Admire us, madman."

"Oh, no. You are real, though of a different order; but you are powerless."

"Of course we can not touch you, yet, nor will we try; but we can hold your mind, or will call those who can. Shall we summon the Thing who makes the desert lonely and drives lost camel-drivers mad?"

"If you do I will reach for God's hand."

"You did that when you saw us. Shall we send you to-night the Thing who makes the horror of great darkness?"

"If you do I will cling to God's hand; but you will do nothing; for, by myself, I am helpless, but in Him I am safe."

"Then why, by fasting and vigil, break your way into our kingdom, if you run back to—Him—like a scared cony when you see us?"

"That I may learn the better to help men."

"What use? You can not tell them what you learn or you will be branded madman and cast out."

"By parable and symbol men have told."

"But why disturb us here?"

"Because the prophets fasted in the wilderness and by this path sons of the prophets break their way through to God."

"Oh, if you drag them into it, we leave."

"Farewell, then, quickly."

"Nay, rather, we will stay and help you! A little more skill—and wisdom not to talk—and you would be worth helping. We could show you gold, more millions than are coined on earth to-day, with precious stones. You could own half the world and use it in your charities. We could show how to read men's minds and to confuse those opposed to you. You could gain power—power as you pleased—all power if you liked. Think how you could use power to serve God."

"There is no time in threescore years and ten to use such power."

"You must have sensed the strength of healing that lies latent in every man. We could show you how to get long life—very long life—centuries—perhaps life perpetual. Think of a world with you at the head of it having all wealth and power. Think what you could do for God."

"With you to guide me?"

"You would, of course, admit our worth to you."

"So worship you? You have no worth to me."

"Fool, is that final?"

"God giving grace, it is. I weary that I must pass through your land to find my Father. While watching you I have learned something of altering the focus of my mind to shut you out. Therefore, begone."

"They perish who defy us."

"Of course, of course! The worst that you can do is crucifixion. You fade too slowly. Go!"

Bar Ad endured the sandy desert and the dry places three weeks. He could no more; because, while forgiven now, he had once been not pure in heart. When he came back the hawk-look on the faces of all the brethren was stamped on his.

XVIII

"Nobody will instruct me," complained Bar Ad.

"Ask any brother anything and get a truthful answer," smiled Malachi. "None volunteers."

"But why?"

"It is the law of nature. Ask nature anything and get a truthful answer. Knowledge depends on questions men have sense to ask. Yet nature never volunteers a treatise on truth. If we ask no question, or the wrong questions, she teaches us; but not by treatise. Her lesson, then, is given by tusk and talon."

Bar Ad became a competent questioner. He had sense enough to divide a matter into sections and press each section to the end. He did it very thoroughly; and grew both a joy and a plague to his instructors.

After some months of question-asking he was transferred to another cave of the Nazarites and then to another as a most promising pupil and a great pest. Yet the very teachers who transferred him, learned to love him. He made a multitude of friends and his reputation as one of the best-instructed of the brethren spread through the order. His questions on fasting and its effects led him to fast intelligently. His questions as to prayer and its powers made him pray. His questions as to the force of one's thoughts on others made him control his thoughts. He was skirting the abyss of self-righteousness when he made a discovery. Two men were going up in the order as they might mount a ladder; and the other was the better man. They met in the tawny desert. Bar Ad followed the other man, who had gone out for meditation, his excuse a bag of unneeded provisions.

These two young men, at a glance, read each

other's characters. The younger and the greater of the two was John bar Zacharias. They looked like a young eagle and a hawk. John, Zacharias' son, carried a cyclone in his soul and drank in knowledge as a simoon soaks up water. His voice was like a bell. "Tell of the Greeks of Hippos," he boomed. Then, "Tell again why Rome rules." Then, "Go back and tell once more why there are bandits." He knew more hearsay evil than Bar Ad had ever heard of; but his mind mirrored it as a perfectly-polished shield mirrors a landscape without absorbing any. It was not in his heart.

When John had heard about Addai's life in the leisurely detail of the unhurried desert, they discussed the lessoning of Simon. "Vengeance is wrong," said John, "not in itself, but because it is a divine prerogative. Nature never forgives. We human beings must not meddle, though, or we are smitten. Still, even God sometimes uses human agents and, in His own good time, places the rod in the hands of him who is to smite. Wait that time." Then he went on to speak of higher things. They were in a cleft in the rocks, looking out over the yellow waste toward Egypt, through lucid heat-clouds rising from the sand as from hot metal.

"From Egypt hath God called His Son," paraphrased John dreamily. "It is quite true, Bar Ad, that we have half the literate moral free men in the world. It had to be so. You are right that we could take the world, obeying the right leader. You are wrong when you dream that our men would obey anybody. It is the nature of our people that the little finger of their disagreements with each other is greater than the thigh bone of their hatred for an outsider."

"Yet He shall rise from us, John, and that soon. We are like men upon a mountaintop, who watch the first faint golden streaks of daybreak in the east."

"Egypt has Osiris resurrected, Addai. In Antioch they celebrate salvation by death and resurrection of Adonais. Farther up the coast it is by Dionysius, farther yet by Mithra. The Druids of the northern forests tell of Freya. All mean no more than that the sun dies at night and rises in the morning or the year dies in autumn and rises in the spring."

"They mean the same thing, John, but more than that. When the candidate in the Mysteries is slain, buried and raised again, whom does he represent?"

"A god; usually the sun-god."

"A death is dramatized. Have you died? A burial is enacted. Are you buried? When you are ceremonially raised, does it mean that you have received immortal life or shall receive it?"

"These things are future. I have not died, been buried or risen—yet."

"All mysteries enact the history of One incarnate, who dies and rises to save the world. Whom can the initiate represent, then, but the one true God, who has not taken flesh but will take flesh, not died but will die, not risen but will rise, not saved the world but will save it, and that soon?"

"Malachi's idea!" said John, stroking a great imaginary beard. "But, Addai, that means that all our prophecies soaked over, like water through a sponge, from the foul idolatries of the mystery religions."

"No, John. The old, old hope of an incarnate God, given in the dim dawn to the great patriarchs, has spread outside of Israel. Inspired men, like Baalim, put it in their great teaching mysteries. It is corrupted, but still there."

"This goes beyond old Malachi. Where did you get it?"

"By asking questions here and questions there among the brotherhood; by living with the Romans

and the Greeks and finding them human; by reading the prophets; by meditation; by fasting and by prayer."

"But the Messiah is probably in Israel now. The Incarnate God walks unknown upon earth."

"How else but unknown should He walk, John, till He be ready?"

There was a number of communities of Nazarites. Their first law was subsistence from the wilderness, and the wilderness was sterile; therefore they had to scatter. No one community was large for the life was not unduly popular.

Bar Ad, because of his changes from school to school, found himself used as an ambassador. Nazarites were a league of sovereign states. Each school kept vows; but any man was free to withdraw at any time, as the grown sons of a family are free to move away and return. Things that concerned all the schools were settled by messages between the elder brethren. If all could not agree, small councils were called. The Nazarites had invented representative government.

Debate was quiet and not copious, because it was mingled with meditation and silent prayer. The search was for light from above. Sometimes these men really did get light from above. Bar Ad had once or twice experienced it himself—a crystallization and coordination of the elements of a problem into a sudden great illuminating certainty. One demagogue would have ruined such an assembly; but demagogues did not attain to it.

In his capacity as connecting link, Bar Ad made one trip to Egypt, where he was sent to stay a year and learn the wisdom of the Egyptians. He found temples full of religious dancing-girls and was disgusted; also, he was tormented by thoughts of Karis. He made another trip to Persia. Old Malachi sug-

gested that they learn if the Magi of Persia had new light on Him who was to be King of all the world. Bar Ad did not want to go, for he was on the trail of a fascinating possibility connected with going into a trance by breathing slowly. He knew a brother who could do it. During the trance one had dreams and the dreams were often true.

However, he set out, armed with a password, an address, a bag of golden darics and orders to observe the slums of Babylonia on the way. After three years he returned with a letter of recommendation, a ring and other gifts from the Magi, reports on the slums of Edessa, Nineveh and Babylon and word that He who was born to be King of the world must be alive now. Certain Magi of their number had seen Him as an infant. They would have known if He had died.

This was news of weight. A council was summoned. As it would decide the fate of the fraternity it was a very great council, including half the brethren.

A cavern in the Judean hills faced the southern end of the Dead Sea—a cavern in whose vast vault not half a brotherhood but half a dozen brotherhoods such as the Nazarites might gather. Carefully hidden, a jealously guarded secret, it was seldom opened; but, once or twice in a lifetime, something of importance to warrant a great meeting happened, and then the Nazarites used it.

At order of the masters of the schools, Bar Ad told of his visit to the Magi and ended:

"They say the King of All is living now. He was born at Bethlehem and, through their advice, escaped the death Herod the Great made for Him there. He is thirty years old and must declare Himself soon."

Bar Ad sat down and the elders consulted. John bar Zacharias stood it for two hours. At last he rose.

Rapidly outlining Bar Ad's idea that Hebrews could take the Roman Empire because the bulk of the

Empire was degenerate and more than half its educated free and moral men were in the Oasis, he went on:

"Most of you know my story; but bear with me, my masters, if I repeat. My father, Zacharias bar Abias, was a priest of the temple. Each priest offers sacrifice once only in his life, according to lot. My father was old before his name was drawn. He went into the holy place to burn incense before the Lord, a censer of fire from God's altar in his hand. A splendid Presence stood at the right side of the altar of incense—the Angel Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. He foretold the birth of a son, to be named John, who should turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just and prepare a people for the Lord. Gabriel ordered that the boy be brought up a Nazarite. I am that John."

"It is true," said old Malachi, "I taught him."

"It is true," assented the masters of the schools.

"With such a birth, my masters, perhaps I should have spoken sooner; but I am of the younger brethren and waited for my betters. I have prayed God and, as you know, have more than once received His word in answer. As I prayed this morning, coming here, a very great light shone upon me and the Word of the Lord came to me, saying: 'Thus saith the Lord: Thou shalt be My messenger for Him, to go before for to prepare the way for Him; and thou shalt cause many to fall and rise again in Israel.'"

At the "Thus saith the Lord," of open revelation, the brotherhood, thrilled, had risen. Now, obeying John's gesture, they sank.

"It is no more than Gabriel told my father, but now it is direct to me. Therefore, brethren and my masters, I leave to-morrow to go among the people and tell them of their disobedience and of God's wisdom and of our coming King.

"I think I know that King. There can not easily be two such. The Magi's message defines Him. I know a man who, by advice of Magi to His parents, escaped the massacre of babes at Bethlehem. Angels announced His birth to shepherds. He is rightful heir—Prince of the house of David and our King. His parents took Him into Egypt and He returned. An old man in the temple hailed Him Messiah, by light of the Divine. My mother knew His mother well. Malachi knows Him. He is the lad who came to see me at the school when I was but a lad. He lives now as a carpenter in Nazareth of Galilee."

"Do you speak by inner light?"

"Not by the inner light, but by our reason, Malachi and I think He must be the man. But this much, by the inner light, I know; that I, John, am ordered to go out among the people now, at once. I am to tell them of their sins, and of the coming of the King, their King, and make them ready for His coming and for the great new day which most of you shall see, yea, you shall see; but I, like Moses and the promised land, I shall not live to see it."

XIX

John took Bar Ad with him, for the Brotherhood ruled that it was not safe for one Nazarite to venture into civilization alone. They camped next day by the stone bridge over Jordan, on the Jericho side. John talked to Bar Ad of the coming Deliverer, where a group of Galileans going home from Jerusalem could hear. Attracted by his pungent satire these made camp where they were, to hear the Nazarites. Others joined, till the camp grew so large it had to be shifted. John moved up Jordan bank, finding place after place too cramped as the crowds grew, until he hit on Bethabara, where the road from Hippos to Cæsarea fords Jordan River, just below the Sea of Galilee. There he found roads, food and room enough. The vast crowd built for itself booths, as at Passover. It was winter in the hills, but down in the golden Jordan valley it was not too cold to camp.

Bits of John's wild eloquence survive. From them we judge that, except Jesus, he was the greatest religious orator of all time. He invented evangelistic preaching. He must have been a perfect tornado of epigram. None to compare with him has ever risen in history; for Jesus' speeches, though greater, were different.

John's speeches were sweeping cyclones of scorn. He had a sincere and intelligent contempt for the people of Palestine. He would not wear their clothes, accept their gifts, enter their houses nor eat their food, but slept in the open and lived on parched locust-meal mixed with wild honey, brought in from the desert. He said the Benai were more sinful than the heathen; for the heathen world did not know any

better and they did. Then he rehearsed their imperfections in stinging epigram. He said their divorce-laws made them all actually or potentially adulterers and adulteresses. His most famous remark, however, was when he called them "vipers"—a brood of yellow vipers lying under stones; harmless enough when let alone, but each one coiled to kill when his own stone was lifted, his own particular private sin disclosed.

The mob adored him. His analyses of human nature were so infernally true. Men heard of his odd sayings and laughed; then came to hear him—and did not laugh. At Bethabara his crowd numbered tens of thousands. He told his hearers the absolute truth about the worst side of themselves and he illuminated it with the lurid lightning of volcanic epigram.

Rescue from this, he thundered, was at hand. The Great Deliverer was already here. He appointed a definite act of enlistment for those who wished to serve the coming King. This, with his usual savage contempt for sin, was washing. He told men they were dirty—dirty from the skin inward to the very core and center of their scarlet souls. Then he began publicly washing them. This was at once confession of sin and public announcement that the candidate would join the Messiah when He came. John baptized so many tens of thousands that he had to choose helpers.

His public ministry lasted some six months. About the middle of it, at Bethabara, pressure increased. He prayed and fasted almost all the time and his wild eloquence redoubled. "Wake up from your stupidities," he boomed. "Get a new view-point. The splendor of the Most Highest is at hand." His crowds, already vast, became gigantic. He practically mobilized an army under booth. The crowd ate out of his hand. One flash of bitter politics and they would blaze. He could have marched upon Jerusalem and have taken it.

The Sanhedrim was made up of priests, scribes and rich men. About a third of them were Sadducees and agnostics. At first they viewed John's movement with amusement, but now it grew too massive to ignore. So they sent down a group of members to investigate.

"Who are you?" asked the leader of this group. He was tall, prosperous, well set-up, with a brown pointed beard, a broad high forehead, polished manners, a narrow face and educated eyes, too close together.

"I am nobody," answered John. "Only a voice."

"Are you Messiah?"

"Certainly not."

"Are you Elijah?"—the reference was to the prophecy that, when Messiah came, Elijah would come first.

"I am not."

"Are you the mysterious prophet, greater than Moses, whom Moses foretold?"

"I am not."

"Who are you? We must take some kind of report to the Sanhedrim."

"I am a voice—the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God!'"

The day after this group went home John gathered his helpers and lieutenants and pointed out a young Galilean peasant. "Look well at him," he ordered. "This is our King. Six weeks ago He came to me for baptism. I did not know that He was the Deliverer, but I do know Him personally. He is without sin—the only man I know of without sin—the only man I know. There is no sense in cleansing that which is clean. I need to be baptized by Him. I said so. He said that washing was for joining the new kingdom as well as cleansing, and told me to obey. Then, as

He came up out of the water, I saw the heavens open. I saw the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descend upon Him and God's voice said: 'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Brothers and friends, this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; yea, I bear witness this is the Son of God!"

The Galilean passed on before John finished and was lost in the crowd. It did not greatly matter. As Bar Ad said, He was not the kind that stayed lost. As the crowd grew, Bar Ad had necessarily seen less of John, for it fell to him to organize and police the camp; but he still held a certain seniority among the helpers, and he and John, both being Nazarites, often slipped off at night together up the purple hills to pray. They did this now, for Bar Ad had a question:

"Who is He, John?"

"Jesus of Nazareth; the same of whom I told the brotherhood."

"You said you saw and recognized the Holy Spirit, John, the Ruach Elohim, and heard the Bath Quol, the voice of God?"

"What prophet, Addai, never saw before nor told of, save Abraham, the friend of God, who worshiped the three men who talked with Him."

"John, we have seen the Angel of the Lord, who spoke from the burning bush to Moses, whom Moses worshiped. How often have the prophets said there is one God who sends His Spirit and His Angel in and out, as He will, and they return into His breast again. The Angel of the Lord has taken flesh and dwells among us."

Next afternoon John pointed out Jesus of Nazareth again. Bar Ad was absent, called to settle a dispute between two booth-dwellers; but, by arrangement among John's lieutenants, two of them followed Jesus. Next morning they and two more were gone.

They were Simon and Andrew bar Jonas and James

and John bar Zebedee, once skipper and crew of a Galilean fishing-boat and among John's best men. Bar Ad, in his eagerness, discovered their absence before dawn, by going to their booths. It was useless to hunt for them in the vast camp. He went down and inspected the watch at the ford, and waited for them there. At crystal-and-sapphire dawn they came and with them Jesus of Nazareth.

Bar Ad hailed them. They rejoiced that they had found the Messiah, the Prince, the Heir of David, their rightful King. John's testimony that He was Son of God seemed to mean nothing to them, though it meant all the world to Bar Ad. They would follow the King according to their vow at baptism. They had no intention of coming back to John. Then they brought Bar Ad forward and presented him to the King.

Jesus of Nazareth was in the ordinary dress of a Galilean rabbi. He was about thirty years old, tall, sinewy, strong, with brown eyes and brown hair to His shoulders and a full brown beard. He was self-evidently a genius; no one could look Him straight in the eyes and doubt it for a moment; but Bar Ad, studying Him, could see no signs of more. Jesus was waiting for a friend named Philip, who was to meet them at the ford with his best friend, Nathanael. Bar Ad, as the talk went on, threw the full force of his will into a silent pleading for a sign if this were really the Angel of the Lord in human flesh. Then Philip came and, as he joined the group, Jesus called attention to Nathanael, saying: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

"How do you know me?" asked Nathanael.

"Before Philip called you, when you were praying under the fig-tree, I saw you."

Nathanael answered, trembling: "Master, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel."

"Because I said 'I saw you' do you believe? You

shall see greater things than these. Solemnly, in the presence of God, I promise that you shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

They started across the ford. Bar Ad made one last frantic silent appeal and turned back to John. He never saw, until months afterward, that, in Nathanael's answer to Jesus' question he had received and failed to recognize the prayed-for sign.

Jesus was baptized just after Christmas and called John's men some seven or eight weeks later. Simon the son of Jonas was a stubborn soul. He liked his friends. In two weeks he was back again at Bethabara: this time as skipper of a fishing-boat for Zebedee and Jonasson, dropped down from the blue lake of Galilee with a load of fish. The river was navigable down to the first ford. He sold his fish to the crowd and then came up to speak to John.

"The greatest miracle since Elisha's time," he called, "Jesus of Nazareth has turned water into wine at Cana of Galilee!"

"We had the story from the toastmaster," answered John dryly. "He saw but does not really quite believe it—Simon Peter."

"That does not matter in the least," retorted Peter cheerfully. "Jesus is His own miracle. He lives at my house now, and so I know. Come and join us, John."

John swept his hand around the great camp in a silent gesture.

"I know," acknowledged Peter, "but this must break up, soon, to go to Passover. Come back from there and join us. It was not fitting that the Heir of David should be a carpenter in a hill village. He and His widowed mother and His cousins James and Joses and Simon and Jude and Maria, the wife of Clopas, their mother, are my guests at Capernaum,

until they can get a house of their own. Therefore I fish again, having so great a family."

"Join him, John," begged Bar Ad.

"Will you, too, leave me, Addai?"

Then Peter rose and swore, wagging his crisp black beard disgustedly. "John," he ended, "you have too much sense for that. You are God's prophet, but He is King. I have looked into the genealogies. All Galilee would blaze at the lifting of His finger. Judea will follow you. Together, you can take the nation—and the world."

"Simon, I promised the Nazarites from the schools to go up with them. I promised the Samaritans to speak at Ænon, at their borders on the hilltops, after Passover, for there are many springs there, and it will be too hot in Jordan cleft. Promises must be kept. Did He send for me?"

"Certainly not. How could He, being a guest at my house. I invite you."

"In any case I could not, Simon. Promises must be kept."

John and Bar Ad went up with the Nazarites by easy stages. They did not reach Jerusalem until "house-cleaning day," just before Passover, when the law required that all leaven be cast out of houses. On the way, the Nazarites thoroughly discussed Jesus. There is no machinery for exhaustive debate so perfect as a group walking along a road; for men fall back or hurry forward or cluster as they like and, having nothing else to do, thrash out a matter thoroughly. The verdict was that, by the prophecies and by John's open vision, Jesus could be nothing else than the Angel of the Lord, incarnate.

"Old Malachi has thought so all his life," said Bar Ad.

"Tut, tut," objected Marcus Marcellus Murio, who, dressed as a Nazarite, had joined them for the trip.

"There is a better reason. The people talk among themselves about His moving to Capernaum. They quote the prophets, saying:

> 'The people in the land of utter night
> See a great light.
> On those who in Death's valley drowse supine
> Shall that Light shine.'

The mob passes it on as a great joke on Capernaum and the lake-cities. They laugh, but they identify Jesus of Nazareth with that light."

"I notice," remarked John, "Simon talked only politics and thought of Jesus only as the King."

At Jerusalem the Nazarites went joyously off with John to meet old Malachi, while Bar Ad found an even older friend—Shalluq. The outer court was crowded, the sheep and cattle and dove markets in full blast, the money-changers desperately busy. It was irreverent to offer to God a heathen coin. The ancient coinage of the country was in the coffers of the temple. Money-changers bought it from the priests and sold it to the people.

The old man was beginning to look old. Bar Ad caught for the first time a hint of weakness in the turn of his head. Therefore, when greetings were done, he spoke at once what was on his mind.

"Shalluq," he frowned, "I no longer like this money-changing. John Baptist thinks ill of it."

"I only keep it up for you, my Lord Addai. I have saved a modest competence. I have houses, now, and lands."

"Sell out, then, and keep my half the price."

While they yet spoke, for Shalluq was eager to make report of the last few months, a sudden hubbub rose in that far corner of the court where men sold cattle. Every one turned. Then a charging bullock

burst through the dove-sellers. The crowd scattered and took refuge in the great colonnaded porches around the square. Then the sheep, already blatting, stampeded for the great gate, more cattle charging through them. In the cleared space a man appeared and began to throw down those piles of light wicker-work cages containing doves which the cattle had spared; so that a halo of whirling cooing doves surrounded Him—and *such* a man. Bar Ad thought of Bar Abbas raging among the Roman soldiers and of the giant Bar Eli whom he had fought before Tiberius and then of thunderclouds, lightning-blasts, tornadoes, volcanoes, earthquakes, and then of that Angel of the Lord who smote the Egyptians. Leaving the doves, the man began to overturn the tables of the money-changers and spill the money on the pavement. By ones and twos a dozen men withstood Him. As He drew near to them each turned and ran. Suddenly, Bar Ad felt a gigantic will impinge upon His own. He swept Shalluq's money off the table into his girdle, then, with one arm around Shalluq, turned and ran also, as from some giant of a sane madman.

When the vast temple court was nearly clear and the porches round it packed with a solid mass of frightened men a Levite, carrying a jar of water, came from the Sanhedrim room and started across. The man turned on him and the Levite dropped and broke the jar and fled. Then the man moved toward the great twenty-cubit gateway out of which the sheep and cattle had poured and which was now blocked by a crowd from outside, hurrying in to see what was the matter. That crowd dissolved so quickly that a couple of lame men, two of the beggars who usually sat outside, were left in the gateway like fish out of water, stranded by a receding wave. The man motioned them to Him—they did not dare disobey—and laid His hands on them and suddenly they were straight and whole

and fell at His feet, shouting. Then Bar Ad consciously recognized Jesus of Nazareth. In his heart he had known Him all along. Jesus motioned the cured men to be still, paused on the threshold and spoke—in a voice which seemed sad and not loud, but which reached the farthest limits of the whole vast court. He said:

"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

XX

Bar Ad met John, old Malachi and the Nazarites, as agreed. He told them of the cleansing of the temple.

"You should have done that, John," mused Malachi stroking his beard. "There are two things a man must never publicly question or he dies—the honesty of dishonest men and the chastity of an unchaste woman. Remember your own story of the viper coiled under the stone? The chief priests will not dare arrest Jesus, on account of the people; but now they will watch and wait and plot together and touch events here and twist them there until they are crushed themselves or until they have brought Jesus to death on some other charge than that of interfering with the finance of the world and cleansing the temple. Yet He is right. The temple had to be cleansed. It is God's house of prayer, and nobody could pray there because the chief priests *had* made it a den of thieves. You should have cleansed it."

"And died?"

"Dear boy, we all die anyhow. You know the revelation of the Spirit; and I, who would so gladly take your place, am not found worthy. I must live, to see it."

"There is another and a greater need," said John, and lapsed into silence.

Bar Ad went through the motions of a great religious worship although for days his energies were really taken up with living over and over the cleansing of the temple. Old Malachi presided at the Passover supper. John, although a prophet of the Lord, lay among the younger brethren. "Is the man really humble," Bar Ad asked himself. "Can it be that some unknown motive, and not pride, keeps him from joining Jesus?" They slept on the floor of the borrowed Passover room and, at sunrise, went out to hear the temple choir.

Nazarites loved, and never failed to hear, the last note of the music at the great feasts. Jerusalem supported the grandest choral music in the world. Ten thousand picked male voices composed her choir. They were Levites, chosen from a couple of hundred thousand. They were trained; not merely for a lifetime but, by heredity, for many generations. The worst of them were voices superior to the best of many cities. The best of them were worth crossing the central sea to hear. Their songs were written by the greatest lyric poet of the world, older than Homer. Their music was the chosen joy and heartbreak of earth and heaven.

When that vast superbness, led by the sweep of a single silver trumpet, crashed into any of a hundred choruses whose mere written words, without the music, make all men thrill and shiver, it was as if souls were released to paradise. Everything within hearing stopped, and stayed stopped, until the last faint far sweet echo slowly and softly sank and died away.

John was moody. He had passed, almost alone, through the great tenements of the lower city, questioning. Bar Ad could not set out with him to Ænon. He was compelled to stay a day or two with Shalluq, to put arrangements for closing up the money-changing into business form. He promised to come soon. In parting, after the morning sacrifice, John said: "Look into the matter of divorces among the common people, and report."

Bar Ad went home with Shalluq. He found the old man comfortably established in four rooms in a forty-room house, with a dog, a cat, a servant and—a wife. She was a pleasant-faced person of forty.

"Why, Shalluq," marveled Bar Ad, "I did not know that you were married; and to a woman half your age."

Shalluq bristled, then laughed. The woman laughed musically, without bristling.

"Thank you, my Lord Addai. My name is Martha.

Shalluq says you wish him to sell out and retire—and keep your half the money. We are grateful. It will make us comfortable for life."

"And welcome," said Bar Ad. "But, Shalluq, your marriage! I dimly remember, as a little boy on the estate, a wife of yours whom you divorced. Somehow, I have never connected you with women since."

"She was my third," said Shalluq. "Martha, here, is my sixth."

"Are you so many times a widower? I did not know it."

"Oh, no. One died; but I divorced the rest."

"And yet, Shalluq, you frowned on me at Hippos for little Karis!"

"Oh, come, my Lord Addai, that's different, and you know it. If you had married and divorced her—but you did not; you kept a sounder of slave-girls. They are shameful. Our maids are sweet and modest, pure and clean. Why, I have known a Jew to give his whole fortune to save his only daughter from her legal week in the temples in Babylon. But when a woman has been two or three years married and her husband tires of her, that's different. We are married young, by our parents. We do not choose each other. We don't like slaves. I know Rome as well as you do. Those brazen hussies that the Romans own are worse than their mistresses. One man to one woman is the clean custom of our nation; but, since the Roman laws have been put in over our heads, we sometimes use them to change the woman. After the physical charm of the young stranger whom we hastily marry has worn stale, why shouldn't we change, if she prove hard to live with? Some other man will enjoy and find her pleasant, and we can get a new one."

"You plead, Shalluq; you plead like a scribe! You usually think straighter than that. Our divorce laws are older than the Romans. Besides, if you change the

woman you change the man. So buxom a person as Martha, here, would not stay single long."

"So I told my last husband, sir, when he divorced me."

"What, Martha? How many?"

"Two, sir. Shalluq is third."

"Half the laborers on the estate were divorced; and so, for that matter, were half the landowners around us. But six, Shalluq, six! I am revenged for Karis. What do your neighbors say?"

"Why, nothing, Addai. Nobody says anything but you. Why should they? Have you lived so long among Nazarites that you grow countrified? More than half our people stay married to one woman all their lives, because they love each other; but think of being tied for life to a woman unfaithful or spendthrift or bad-tempered! Such try one wife and then another, until suited. Even our princes do so. Look at Herod himself."

"Oh, Herod has turned Roman and does not count. He keeps slave-girls. Yet, Shalluq, do not misunderstand me. You are within your rights. I laugh, because of Karis. I do not criticize. Yet, I have been with John Baptist; and John does not approve."

"I have heard it, sir," put in Martha sulkily. "The divorce laws are really wrong, but John has got it backward. Men can divorce women but women can not divorce men. To be right the law should be equal."

"Oh, surely it comes to the same thing, Martha. If a clever woman can not nag a man until he frees her—then she is not clever. So you think half the people live contentedly without divorce, Shalluq?" went on Bar Ad.

"Oh, more than half. In the poorer quarters of the cities, among the wretched, divorce is common, however, and among the rich, who can take care of children. It is commonest of all among the fruit-farmers. Men with ten acres in trees work desperately hard for half the

year and spend the other half with money and in idleness. Then they change wives all round."

"I never realized all this before," mused Bar Ad, "though in a vague dim way I knew it. Among the Gentile nations I felt myself in muck-heaps, because they are as promiscuous as pigs, while our boys and girls are chaste and innocent, our young brides virgin and all our older people decently married. I did not realize that behind that curtain of decent marriage lay this! Well, you and I can't change it, Shalluq. Get out pen, inkhorn and papyrus and let us draft the papers of our money-changers' agreement."

"Nobody wants it changed," summed up Martha, resting one hand on Shalluq's shoulder. "As it is, a poor woman leaves the wrong man and goes to the right one and gets a little happiness."

Bar Ad took to John, up north at Ænon, news that the chief priests had set the great temple court in order and everything there was as before. He found John's multitudes at Ænon nearly as vast as those at Bethabara, though the camp had started only a few days. He said so.

"True," answered John, "but few come from Jerusalem."

"Have you heard why?"

"Only a rumor. Nothing certain."

"Jesus of Nazareth is preaching in Judea and His disciples baptize. The whole vast population around Jerusalem has gone to Him. He was at John Zebedee's house. The lame men who were cured brought their lame friends and their friends' friends and the friends of their friends' friends for help and healing, till He was forced to start a camp out in the country where He speaks to the crowds and cures the sick. His disciples baptize for the remission of sins. Join Him, John. You have kept your word to the Samaritans."

"He has not asked me, Addai."

"How can He, till you go to Him? John, John, you are the greatest prophet since Elijah rose heavenward in a chariot of fire and dropped his mantle at Elisha's feet but left his eloquence for you; but shall the Incarnate Angel of the Lord attend upon a prophet?"

"It is not that, Addai bar Ad. This land groans under two great shameful sins. Business chokes religion. Divorce has let in all impurities such as the Gentiles use, but worse. We cloak our adulteries under the name of lawfulness and great example. He cleansed the temple, Malachi is right. In the end He will die for it. Truly, I should have done it. There is another piece of work, and he who does it will die swiftly. Unless I do it soon He may forestall me. It is not fitting that God's Prophet and God's Son should both leave unrebuked the land's adulteries."

"Not that. Not that, John."

"That very thing, Bar Ad, for fear He might do it first and so destroy Himself."

Jewish divorce was cheap. People could grant it to themselves. The husband returned to the wife, before witnesses, any dowry she had brought into the family, certified in writing that he had repeated a legal formula, and the thing was done. John had already spoken of these divorce laws, calling them legalized lust and ending: "You adulterers and adulteresses, how *can* you escape the damnation of hell."

Ænon was near the border of Samaria, but in Galilee, in Herod's territory, a few miles from Bar Ad's home and about twenty from Herod's palace of Julias Livias. To Ænon came a man from Jerusalem; probably sent by the Sanhedrim, for he knew how to handle a crowd. This unnamed speaker picked a quarrel with John's lieutenants about baptizing and demanded loudly to be led to John. A great crowd, of course, followed.

"The multitudes that follow Jesus grow," he shouted. "They are already larger than those here. His disciples

baptize for the remission of sins, as you do, and He does wonderful works of healing, which you do not. John, John Baptist, why, after four hundred years of silence in Israel, why do two rival prophets now appear at once and teach separate multitudes within a few miles of each other?"

He merely voiced the feelings of the crowd. All Palestine was asking the same question.

Then John made his last speech.

"Because of the land's wickedness," he answered. "Really, there is no rivalry. You yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ but am sent before Him. He must increase and I must decrease."

He gave other testimony concerning Jesus, outlined the desperate condition of morals in Israel and used the incestuous and adulterous marriage of Herod and Herodias as an example of the defiant difference between the nation's law and God's law. He ended: "Go to Jesus. He that believes on the Son has eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in him."

Bar Ad and other lieutenants, shaken, surrounded John and urged him to vanish into the wilderness at once. "Flee," said they, "like Elijah. Herodias is worse than Jezebel. She will not forgive this."

"I stay with my people."

"They will not stay with you. The more faint-hearted are already slipping off."

"Then, I stay with God."

"Who can find a Nazarite in the wilderness! God is in the desert. Five stadia and you are free. Go to Him there, pray, fast, and, when the time is ripe, return with power."

"If I rebuke wickedness in high places and take the consequence, I am the voice of God and Israel knows it. If I slip off like a fox that has killed a lamb, Israel, being evil, will pity Herod. Then Jesus must speak."

By noon half of the multitude was gone, but the other half handled staves and knives, made slings out of the hems of their garments, and muttered together. By mid-afternoon a troop of mounted police rode up, but held aloof. An hour later a squadron of regular cavalry came. Their captain spread them out in a long line and moved upon the camp. He halted when sling-stones began to whiz among his horses. Everything was done with hesitation, for every one realized that a very little thing would bring on civil war. The multitude was of two opinions:

"Take to the wilderness, John," some shouted. "We will hold back these cowards."

"Give the word, John," called others. "Instead of Herod taking you we will go take Herod."

The captain of the cavalry handed his cloak and sword to a trooper, dismounted and walked forward, showing his hands empty. Bar Ad moved out toward him. John motioned Bar Ad back and went himself. Their talk took place beyond the hearing of the crowd. It was not long. Then the captain turned and John walked with him to the soldiers. The multitude snarled. It surged forward. John turned and raised his hand. His great voice boomed like a bell:

"Shall I, who am the voice of God crying God's truth in the wilderness, shall not I abide what I have said? I must decrease and He increase. Go to the Lamb of God."

XXI

They galloped John to Herod's palace at Julias Livias. Herod sent him to the border fortress of Machærus. Bar Ad girt up his loins like Elijah and ran behind the horses. There he learned that John's life was in no present danger, so he slept between the palace and the town, then circled back through Jericho to the familiar cave of the school of Malachi. The two were almost opposite each other, with the Dead Sea between.

Thence, after consultation with the brethren, he went back to Julias Livias. His vow as a Nazarite had been up for years. He trimmed his beard, cut short his hair to his shoulders and presented himself to Herod's people, quite truthfully, as a minor brother of the order of the Magi of Persia, detailed to Palestine for study of the Nazarites and at court to speak a good word for John. His ring and letter were sufficient credentials. He might almost as well have come in staff and camels'-hair. His urbanity frightened men who were as urbane as himself. In part it was his leanness, his hawk-face and the white conflagration in his eyes; but, mostly, it was the sheer contagion of his breaking heart.

He was a godsend to the butterflies; for, after all, John's crime consisted of saying that Herod and Herodias were two common adulterers. The whole chuckling court, from Chuza the steward to the flute-girls and horse-boys, agreed with John. Everybody was stifling to laugh in Herod's face, which would be suicide. They took it out by jesting at all the mystics. The presence of the prophet of Persia excused many a smile. They spoke of him and John and Jesus as "Natzri" which is a brilliant triple pun, since it means "Nazarite," and "Of Nazareth," and "The branch of

David." They did not jest to Bar Ad's face. He was too lean and hawk-like and his eyes too much like level lightning.

Herod put Bar Ad off with phrases; for he had no wish to antagonize the Magi. Most princes who had done so had not prospered. Balthazar, therefore—for that was Bar Ad's Magian name—waited much in anterooms and courtyards and prayed in gardens. He had plenty to pray about.

Herod's household was run on a happy-go-lucky mixture of Hebrew, Greek and Roman customs. One could follow any of the three. A great Hebrew house would have had servant-maids but no flute-girls. A Greek mansion would have had flute-girls, but would have kept them strictly in the women's quarters. In Herod's household, like a Roman's, they were underfoot everywhere. Yet a Roman or Hebrew house would have had no special women's quarters, and the palace of Julias Livias had. Herodias usually kept to them. When she came out she was as dictatorial and as imperious as any Roman domina of the Palatine.

Bar Ad kept watch for Karis. He had no wish to be assassinated a second time. She had been at court for years—since before Herod married King Aretas' daughter—and was the dancing-mistress of the flute-girls. It was a week before he saw her, and then they met in an irrigated walk of pomegranates looking down on the Hieromax.

Somebody called, "Bar Ad—Addai bar Ad." There was a rush of sandaled feet and Karis overtook him.

"My name, lady, is Balthazar," he bowed.

"Nonsense!" she laughed and stood and looked at him, her hand upon her heart. Now, Karis was nearly thirty; but, with her color heightened by the little run, she did not look nineteen. She had improved and come to her full beauty. Her eyes, once violet, were now great pools of purple.

"You were a cub of a boy," she smiled, "but now you are a man." He bowed again.

"True, lady, I was a cub of a boy and now I am a man; but alas, madam, not the man you wish. I am a minor member of the Magi, sent here to study Nazarites, and seeking audience with Herod since John is greatest of Nazarites and Herod has imprisoned him."

She stamped her snowy foot.

"You are Addai bar Ad, of Armageddon, a gladiator and a galley-slave. The scourge-marks must be on your shoulders now."

"It is true, lady, that there are scourge-marks on my shoulders. They were put there to wean my heart from women."

"Hateful as ever, but a man at last!"

She turned and left him swiftly.

Bar Ad, making his daily visit to Chuza the steward to press for audience, remarked that Magi were used to life at court, but only with a permit to go and pray in the hills. Chuza had long learned that Bar Ad's prayers were genuine and that he really fasted. He therefore stretched a point and gave an order passing him through the night-guards. From that time on Bar Ad spent hours outside the palace. Particularly, he did his sleeping in hidden places in the hills; also, he ate only locust-meal and wild honey, with a little bread when at a set dinner. Three times men came to his room when he was there. They found him awake, apologized, and tiptoed out.

After a week of this Karis spoke again. It was in a courtyard, under a hundred curious eyes; for Bar Ad walked no more alone in gardens. She sneered:

"They tell me you are afraid to sleep and afraid to eat, Balthazar."

"Lady, the Magi often watch and fast."

"Why do you stay here?"

"To ask Herod to release John."

"If he should see you and refuse, would you go?"

"If he should see me he would not refuse."

This was mere assertion on Bar Ad's part; but the Magi had so superb a reputation that Karis was impressed, as any other woman of her day and district would have been.

"I will beg Herodias to persuade Herod to imprison you with John."

"Nothing could well be better."

Karis looked hard to see if this were truth. It was. He really had little doubt that if he and John were in a cell together they would not stay there long.

"If she persuade Herod to let you see and talk with John, will you go?"

"If Herodias persuade Herod to let John see such friends as he may wish, as often as he like; if she give him the other privileges to which he is entitled, such as walking upon the battlements for air and exercise; if Herod, in short, remember that John is a priest's son and, in his own right, a priest of the temple at Jerusalem, himself—then I will take the order to John's jailors and not return unless I am sent here as a messenger—provided, always, that you understand that the man for whom you took me, one Addai bar Ad, is dead. I do not like barefooted men a-tiptoe with drawn knives at night, asking my pardon because they enter the wrong room. It breaks my meditations. I have made inquiry and find that Addai bar Ad was murdered years ago, just after Passover, on the road to Jericho, by your orders."

"The body was not found."

"Nazarites found it and disposed of it. Now look me in the eye and repeat after me: 'Addai bar Ad is dead.' "

"I will look no magician in the eye."

"Oh, yes, you will! You will look Death in the eye some day, and he is the greatest magician of us all."

"Addai bar Ad is dead, then, if you like; but Baltha-

zar is living. To-morrow or next day a chamberlain shall bring you orders from Herod for the commander at Machærus, and you shall take them there; but, Addai——"

"Balthazar, murderess!"

"Not murderess! I never murdered any one but you, Addai, and failed in that. Addai bar Ad was no great loss; but I am really glad those knives who wandered into Balthazar's room by accident all found him waking. Farewell Ad——Balthazar."

"Wait, madam. You have cast, most justly, some doubt upon my courage. 'Tis true that I have been afraid of aimless death at hands of your assassins; but not so much as to let a woman call me coward!"

Like lightning Bar Ad drew his dagger and thrust the jeweled hilt into her hand.

"I have no chain-mail on me," he said, opening his robe a little at the throat. "A hundred people see us. None can hear. You can justify my death in a dozen ways."

Karis stood fingering the blade.

"You think I will not strike," she said. "A very old trick, Addai."

"True, an old trick; but, since I do not know if you will strike or not, one which takes courage."

"More hateful than before and still a boy!" gasped Karis; and, throwing the dagger ringing at his feet, she sped away.

The enormous fortress and palace of Machærus was the most splendid of all Herod's many houses. It stood on a bastion of a crag jutting out over the Dead Sea and it commanded a view which made men gasp when they suddenly came out upon the fortress battlements. Below them lay the great palace, below that the tiny toy-like houses of the town, below that the hard angry, alkali-blue mirror of the Dead Sea reflecting the vast abrupt whitey-yellow escarpment of the Judean hill

country beyond it. South and east tumbled trans-Jordan raised its yellow folds, detailed jewel-like in that dry minuteness which the crystal-clear air of irrigated country gives. Northward stretched the Jordan Valley, emerald-green up to irrigation limit and fenced by the purple hills of Samaria and the red cliffs of Perea. Over all shone the blue Syrian sky, and almost as plainly shone over all the sense of ancient and immeasurable Divine Power.

On the battlements of the fortress above the palace John was permitted to receive his disciples, for he walked there every day. From these battlements he could look out over the whole Jordan chasm. The scene of his life's labors lay before him. He saw beyond it, too, for in the far south was the blue mass of Sinai of the law, and in the far north Hermon of the transfiguration lifted its pure white and purple cone.

What confinement meant to the freest of all human beings then living only a Nazarite could know. He could not now follow Jesus' career in person, but he could by messenger.

Bar Ad, when he reached Machærus, found he had been practically tricked by Karis and Herodias. John had already most of the privileges the formal order gave him. He smiled at Bar Ad's posing as one of the Magi and added him to his group of messengers.

These messengers came and went. The long, long summer wore away, and John grew gaunter and more restless, pacing the battlements. Jesus had gone upon a preaching-trip through Galilee alone. "He does it very badly," said John the Baptist. "I could have put a hundred thousand people in one place and set Him on a mountain in the midst—and He needs only village synagogues."

The shorter days of early autum brought the land to its full friutfulness before real news came; but then it came in thunderbolts and a wise, cool, clear-headed

man analyzed it as it came, studying Jesus as an old falcon sits on a crag and watches a young eagle take his flight.

Disciple after disciple tore in, breathless, with some new wonder. John set each item in its own due place and sent them out again. Day after day, month after month, such news as never man received before upon this earth was brought to such a man as earth had never seen before, and bit by bit, he read it. "This is as good a place to fast and think in as is my desert," smiled John. Yet he grew gaunter and slept less as time wore on.

"I must have one more fact," John summed up at last. "Did He really raise the dead? It does not fit with these banquets. Shall God come down and dine at rich men's tables and when He has drunken well make a speech bristling with clever epigrams and ending in a good quotable story."

"Why not?"

"God thundered once from Sinai, Addai bar Ad. Where are His thunders now?"

"You did not see Him cleanse the temple, John! I did."

"Why leave me here, then?"

"Miracles of healing are of no use against stone walls."

"If He is Angel of the Lord, incarnate, He can do more than miracles of healing. Go again, Addai. Look if you can see more in Him than a prophet-king."

"There is far more."

Then John grew angry.

"Why does He leave me here, then? He who can raise the dead can free a prisoner. Go, one or two of you, with Bar Ad—you go Bar Asher—ask if it really be He who should come or do we look for another. My time grows short. My jailor said to-day that in a few weeks Herod will come to Machærus."

When they left the town somebody shot at and barely missed Bar Ad with an Arabian arrow. It might have been no more than a startled scout of King Aretas, shooting to cover his own flight, for Machærus was very near the border. It might, however, be a message from the temperamental Karis. Bar Ad, as he went on, turned over Jesus' annoying and fascinating doctrine of forgiveness and finally hit on an idea so harmless if it failed and so completely sure to settle Karis if it succeeded that he chuckled over it. When Herod moved from his palace at Sepphoris to Julias Livias, his household would pass near Jesus. Trap Karis into hearing Jesus preach and see what happened.

John's messengers were lean men, desert-trained. It took four days to get to Jesus and return. When they returned Bar Ad, as spokesman, said:

"He gave no answer to your question. He kept us by His side while healing so many that it staggered us. Then, after preaching to the multitude the Fatherhood of God, He dismissed us, saying: 'Go your way and tell John what ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.' All the way back we argued what He meant. What did He mean, John?"

"Sentence of death, Bar Ad; but pardon after death. No rescue is intended, but the work goes on. Oh, if I had but gone to Him."

"Nothing easier," declared Bar Ad. "We are built much alike. I shave myself, hair and beard, because my term as a Nazarite begins again. Then I walk out at dusk. The guards stop me, find it is I and pass me. When I return we shave you and you walk out. The guards will think it I. No one can recognize a bearded man, new-shaven. Herod dare not hurt me. I really am one of the Magi."

"I will not buy my life with a friend's blood. Herod would kill you."

"Nonsense. Herod does not know what to do with you and will be secretly obliged to me for solving his problem."

"I am a Nazarite for life," refused John.

They pleaded in vain. That none of them would have stooped to save his own life by a broken oath made all their pleadings hollow. At last John began again the long tiger-plungings to and fro and spoke again, though only partly to them:

"When He was baptized He wished to be alone. I rightly let Him go; but when He came back and the Spirit brought me before Him again, I should have gone to Him and put my hands in His and made myself His man. I was too proud. I had a second chance the second day. I was too proud. I should have gone to Capernaum, taking the nation with me; but He had weaned my men away from me and I was jealous. I should have gone to Passover with Him and led all Israel with us—but I was envious. If I had been with Him, I, not He, would have cleansed the temple. That lost Him Israel's rulers and He will die for it; for, since the money-changers are back, He must cleanse it again. He fled through Samaria to avoid arrest. I drove Him there. Nazareth cast Him out. They would have worshiped, had I been with Him. He had to heal an old man at a pool to get the chance, as an accused criminal, to lay His claims before the great theologians of the nation and they rejected Him. Had I been there I would have met them as an equal, He as a master. He had to lay His hands upon a leper to gather a council of Israel together. They rejected Him. I could have brought all Israel as a gift and laid it at His feet. He stilled the tempest. He would have had no need to be afloat, had I been with Him. He has to teach in parables because the lying tongues of Pharisees pervert

His sayings if He speak plainly. Set me but face to face with those same Pharisees, with Israel behind me, and see them scatter.

"When He raised Jairus' daughter and the widow's son, I should have stood beside Him. When He chose twelve, after that mighty sermon on the mount, had I been there He would have chosen me. Now He will need me later—oh, how He will need me—and I—I shall be dead. Pride, envy, jealousy—the inability to cooperate—all the faults of our people—the grim self-will to serve God at any cost to ourselves but in our own way—how I have scourged them in others! O Angel of the Lord, O Son of God, O Lord, my God Incarnate, I do deserve no pardon; but there is pardon; because the work goes on, the work goes on—even though I be not there."

XXII

Bar Ad left John because, for the first time in years, he had business of his own; the temporary and unobtrusive kidnapping of Karis. He had heard Jesus speak; and the wild idea which first occurred to him as a means of stopping any more attempts at assassination now had a higher and a stronger motive. Herod was now at mighty Sepphoris of Galilee, two miles from Nazareth; and any day now the court would move to Machærus, stopping at Julias Livias by the way. Bar Ad worked swiftly.

So, therefore, it was anything but accident when, in his character as a traveling member of the Magi, Bar Ad, one morning, happened upon the lady Karis, mounted on a white mule and lost in a Galilean by-way with the last of a group of grooms who had promised to save her by means of a short-cut two dusty hours of marching in the court-column.

"I am lost, Balthazar," she laughed.

"No, lady, you are found at last," he smiled. Then, to her groom, "Go straight to Julias Livias and say that Balthazar has met the lady Karis and will bring her in as soon as may be."

The man pouched a gold daric from Bar Ad's girdle, saluted and went. Bar Ad took the mule's bridle.

"Lady," he promised, "I will lead you to a near-by village. Jesus of Nazareth and a great crowd are there. I have business for an hour or two with some of His disciples. You will not weary of the wait, for it will interest you to see Jesus. He cures and teaches. When I am free I will escort you safely to Julias Livias or where you wish."

"I have wished many times to see this Jesus. The

court rings with the fame of Him," answered Karis. "Truly, I shall not weary. Can you arrange for me to meet Him?"

"I can not promise that; I only know Him slightly; but I can certainly arrange that those of His disciples whom I know shall place you where you hear Him and see all."

As they went on Bar Ad told of Jesus. Karis knew much of His history already; which she explained by saying that Herodias had it looked into for fear He might prove another John. She had already heard that He was the Son of God and did not altogether disbelieve, referring to the myths of the Greek demi-gods. At this, Bar Ad outlined his theory of the Angel of the Lord, Incarnate, and was amazed to find she understood him.

He placed her, by Peter's help, where she could hear and see everything, then asked for a word with Jesus that should make Him understand her problem.

"There is no need," smiled Peter. "He reads thoughts."

Bar Ad kept out of sight until the long healing was over and the golden speech that followed it half finished, and only came back then because Karis was weeping. She did not notice him except to put a finger on her lips. When the great speech drew to a close Karis woke slowly, as if out of a dream, and asked:

"Where have they gone, Addai?"

"To dine with a local great man."

"Might—might one go also?"

"The crowd will stand on the veranda around his courtyard and hear the speeches."

"Stand aside, Addai. The crowd here know me for the thing I am. Fool, to think that I could dance at Herod's feasts and not be known to every evil mind in Galilee!"

In sheer astonishment Bar Ad stepped back and

Karis glided in. The whisper had gone round and every one made way for her, for her touch, by law, involved ceremonial uncleanness until evening. Having no difficulty in going where she would, she took her place at the foot of the couch on which Jesus lay, and there crouched down. No one dared interfere. As the dinner dragged on she reviewed her life and wept there quietly. Simon, the host, began to watch at last, for as she leaned over, her slow tears dropped on Jesus' feet, according to the law, polluting Him. She could not wipe them off with hands or garments. They, too, were unclean. Timidly, she wiped them off with her hair.

Jesus of Nazareth looked down and saw her; looked a long minute, reading her inmost thoughts. Then He turned back and went on talking. He, at least, did not feel polluted by her touch. When, at last, she realized this a passion of silent sobbing shook her. She removed His sandals and washed His dusty feet with her tears. At last she took out her alabastron, opened it, anointed them with the sweet-smelling nard, rubbed it in well and wiped it off with her long hair. This set her to fresh weeping and then she kissed His feet.

By this time every man in the whole courtyard was either greatly touched or greatly shocked. Nobody was amused. The tension was too great. She was repentant. She had therefore been forgiven. She was no longer polluted and her touch polluted no one, not even the Most Holy. Since she had seen her life in its true light and abhorred it, she was forgiven and was clean. Jesus said to His host:

"Simon, there was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

"I suppose he to whom he forgave most."

"Seest thou this woman? . . . thou gavest me no

water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head thou didst not anoint with oil: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much!" Then, to Karis, He said:

"Your sins have been forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace!"

Karis was dazed with weeping. She rose and groped her way; so Simon Peter took her hand and led her to Bar Ad; then, for good measure, he went out with them. "Take her away," he advised, "and that swiftly. She can bear no more."

"Where, Karis?" asked Bar Ad.

"I do not know," shuddered Karis, "but not to Herod. I can not go to Herod—now. It is not—is not clean there. I must begin life again, somewhere."

Then Simon Peter said:

"Very well; take her to my house at Capernaum and tell my wife about it and Mary, Jesus' mother. Say I sent you."

"How shall good women, unless they heard Him say that I am clean, how shall good women have me?" quivered Karis. "Besides, I can not hide for long. Every man knows me. When he hears where I am Herod will surely send for me and will not let me go."

Then Bar Ad mused:

"I really do not know whether I hate you or love you, Karis. I only know that you overshadow all other women for me. If you say that you will begin a new life, you will, and if Jesus says you are clean, you are. Even Herod dare not take the wife of a free citizen of Galilee. Marry me, Karis."

"You are a Nazarite!"

"The vows are up."

"Herod only knows you as one of the Magi. Can Magi marry?"

"The lesser orders of the Magi marry and Herod knows it, dear. He doubly dare not touch a Magus' wife. I did you great wrong, once, and I am sorry. Marry me, Karis."

"Who? You? Wronged me? Oh, Addai, Addai, are you a raw boy still? Or else—or else—perhaps—a very noble man?"

"No, dear; but one who has seen Jesus of Nazareth."

"Marry him, Karis," settled Peter through his crisp black beard. "He knows what you have been and what you are and, knowing all, he loves you. Go to Capernaum, tell them I sent you and marry him there. Hurry. I must go in!"

"Thanks, Simon Peter. So—so be it, Addai."

The day was far spent and Karis was shaken to the foundations of her being. Bar Ad hurried her away and, watching her face, was silent. "He forgave me, Addai," she whispered once. "He said that God forgave me." And, again: "You, too, forgave me, Addai—He and you and God."

For fear of meeting Herod's people he kept to lanes and by-ways and therefore made poor time, though the white mule walked swiftly. For the same cause he could not reach a caravanserai at nightfall and so, with silver, at a peasant's hut, he found a place for her. He himself slept, wrapped in his cloak, outside.

Next noon they reached Capernaum and, in the fishing-suburb of Bethsaida, found Simon Peter's house. Bar Ad told who they were and that they were sent by Simon, but Karis hushed him before he could say more. "Go, find a stable for the mule," she ordered, and swiftly drew Simon Peter's wife within the door. When he came back the women had been weeping, and Simon Peter's pretty wife treated him with great gentleness. She asked:

"Is it quite settled that you marry?"

"Quite."

"Then I am glad that my man sent you. Here is bread and wine. Eat now, then we will go tell the mothers. They are at Joses bar Clopas' house—the brother who stayed at home."

When they had eaten she led them to a house a few paces away. Like those around it looked out on the blue lake—a two-story yellow house having a little courtyard with a fig-tree. From this courtyard came a sound of gentle singing so beautiful that Karis took command and, with her finger on her lip, tiptoed to the inner doorway. Under the fig-tree sat three women, two of them elderly, the other as old and yet of no age. The two had cushions on the ground but this one was seated, for convenience, in a chair, because she held a little boy in her lap.

"Now sing the glory-song," he said, and laid his head again upon her shoulder.

"When Jesus was a very little boy, smaller than you, He used to sing the glory-song. It has so strange and beautiful an air that, at first, only He and the shepherd who told us could master it—and I. It runs:

> "Glory be to God on high
> And, on earth, peace, good-will to men."

It is so very short that that is all."

There was a pigeon cooing in the tree, but it was silent when she sang.

"Thank you," smiled the little boy. Then looking up: "Why, there is mother."

Karis again sent Bar Ad away to take a walk along the lake-shore. When he returned there were tears in the eyes of all five women and Karis sat on a cushion with her head against the singer's knee.

"Do you think that—that I ought to accept so great

a sacrifice, Mary Mother?" Karis asked her. "Tell in his presence."

"Since Jesus says that she is clean, Addai," answered Mary, "then clean she is—a scarlet dove washed white. Where is your mother, child? She would rejoice to see this day."

"I never had a mother," Karis answered. "She died when I was born."

Then Mary put an arm round Karis' shoulders. "She shall be led from here to Peter's house," said Mary Mother.

The marriage of a maiden always occurred on Wednesday, with great festivities; that of a widow on Thursday and quietly. Karis begged to be married as quietly as possible, on Thursday. The betrothal was almost omitted. It consisted of presenting a piece of money or a letter, with ceremonies. "I gave her all I had some years ago," said Bar Ad, twinkling.

"She ought to have a letter to hang round her neck, over her heart, to treasure always and be buried with, as other brides have," protested Peter's wife, putting her hand to her own breast.

"Very well," agreed Bar Ad, and leading Karis quietly aside he wrote upon a little strip of vellum the only really important letter that ever can be written in this world—"Karis, I love you"—signed and gave it to her. Then he told her the outline of his life since they parted at Capri and, her head on his shoulder, explained that with the work of all his years of continence, prayer and fasting now coming to fruition and John's life hanging by a thread, he dare not destroy everything by living with her yet, but must leave her after the wedding and go back to John. "When the great work is done and Jesus triumphs," he promised, "I will come back to you, a bridegroom to his bride."

The short and simple marriage service took little time, for there was no feast. Karis was led quietly from

Mary's to Simon Peter's house and given to Bar Ad. A silver-bearded Rabbi repeated the formula: "Take her according to the law of Moses and of Israel." Both signed the marriage-contract, the Kethuba, and drank a marriage cup over which the old Rabbi repeated a solemn benediction. There were no bridesmaids nor groomsmen and no public rejoicings. Then, as arranged, Bar Ad hurried back at once to John. Karis saw him go, then laid her head against Mother Mary's knee and wept.

XXIII

"ADDAI," reproached John, "you have, by marriage, left the more excellent way."

"I left Karis with Simon Peter's wife, within the hour, and hastened here, John. I have spent ten long years striving past strength for that clean soul which Karis found in ten short minutes. When you baptized the others you left me out. Give me, I pray, the baptism of repentance. That is the more excellent way."

They gazed deeply into each other's eyes for a long minute and then John bowed his head. "Fetch me the jar of water from my cell," he answered.

The baptism was over when Herod came, for he had lingered long at Julias Livias. Next day a pompous chamberlain with two attendants came to take John to Herod. Because of the danger to Balthazar, Bar Ad had resumed his Nazarite dress and escaped recognition; but he dared not follow John. He stayed and prayed, but some of John's disciples got the news from some of Herod's servants.

"Herod is wet clay in John's hands," they chuckled. "In half an hour they were discussing the divorce law on its merits, with Herod figuring the harm the present way does to the tetrarchy and John booming in, now and then, with a 'Thus saith the Lord.' Herod knows some Scripture, too. Who would have believed it?"

From that time on Herod sent for John nearly every day and planned with him a theoretical Palestine "according to the will of God." He even made some actual changes as to prisoners and prisons; and every day he turned the talk to the divorce laws. John was as much a prisoner as ever; but servants in the passageways began to bow before him as he marched under guard to and from his prison.

Within the women's quarters reigned utter consternation. Suppose that Herod should turn decent? Herodias found the possibility appalling. Herod had had plenty of time to grow weary of Herodias. He was fighting, on her account, a bickering border war with King Aretas, in which every soldier on both sides agreed in condemnation of her. Five million civilians also called her what she was, every time they saw a tax-gatherer; and so renewed their disgust for the divorce laws of the land and their respect for God's real moral law of one woman for one man until death or adultery part them. Even the little half-naked dancing-girls of her own suite despised her; they might be immoral, through no choice of their own, but they were not what she was. Herodias, like a tigress in a trap, saw something must be done, and quickly. She could not pray. God was against her.

Next to John, the worst of her weaknesses was her daughter Salome. Salome was a pretty child, not technically a princess, because her father Philip was a civilian, but treated in Herod's court as a princess and really descended from a line of kings. "But, mother," she begged. "But, mother——"

"This is the night of Herod's birthday feast. His captains and chief governors have come from all the tetrarchy to do him honor. This afternoon the greatest of them were closeted with him for hours while he talked with John."

"But, mother, I—I can not."

"You can and must. You are beautiful, Karis has taught you well, and Karis is not here. Do you know what they talked about with John? Of sending you and me away with a pension, calling back King Aretas' daughter and changing all the laws until the land is clean. They called me—*me*—duly divorced and legally married—an adulteress by the law of God; and they are to meet John again and act to-morrow."

"Mother, this was in secret. How do you know?"

"Do not forget the wine-bearers and slave-girls."

"Send slave-girls in to dance, please, mother. Please! No decent woman appears at a man's banquet."

"I am sending them in now. These brutes are drunk enough; but, when they come out, some one must do Karis' dance—and Karis is not here."

"But, mother, this costume. It—it is not anything."

"It was not meant to be; but it is beautiful. I know how you feel, child, but this is life and death. Within a month, if something is not done to-night, you will be a citizen's daughter in Jerusalem, the Arabian woman will rule here, and I—I shall be dead. Now, go!"

Great Machærus was most famous of all Herod's palaces. Its banquet-hall was a magnificent paved, roofed and vaulted courtyard of a place, gloomy and grand as a cedar-forest in Lebanon and big enough to drill a troop of horse in. Two hundred guests, or less, felt lonely there; but it was none too big for Herod's birthday. All the chief captains of the army, all the principal men of Perea and Galilee were gathered now, the captains in their armor and their plumes, the governors of districts and of cities in gorgeous robes of office.

It was the only wealthy crowd then in the world which really loved good choral music, because it was the only crowd which ever heard any. Rome, Greece and Babylon had sistra and flute-players and individual harp-girls and some of the harp-girls could play on heart-strings; but real love of real music was confined to crowds who knew the temple choir. Herod's chorus was not to be compared with that of the temple. The singers were not Levites nor were the songs sacred. Yet, through contagion, the music had something of the same thrill and haunting quality. Alone of all the music of the world, it set men dreaming.

Slave-girls, delicate as cream and roses, were com-

mon as wine at every feast outside of Palestine, from Rome to Babylon. One girl may be a little prettier than another; but after a while all look alike. Audiences elsewhere saw picked and bare young beauties in public every week and at home every hour. But these men lived in Galilee and Perea, places which, with Judea and Samaria, had built up, through centuries of decency, a real morality and modesty among their women. The land agreed that Herod had to be equipped to entertain visiting princes; but, for reputation's sake, no minor public man could keep young dancing-girls; while his maid-servants, and other men's maid-servants and daughters whom he saw, were as decently-dressed and as really modest as his own.

Therefore it would have been impossible, anywhere else in the whole Empire, to gather so large a crowd of able and influential men who were really interested in the nude. Herod's entertainments had for them the lure of novelty and were like glimpses into—into—into Olympus.

The long line of slave-girls, like cream and honey, gave their massed dances in the cleared space in the center of the great banquet-hall. Then the music changed. They crouched down in a circle, the music changed again and, hesitant and ashamed, Salome came in. Slave-girls are—slave-girls. Here was a princess; a princess of the proud line of Herod the Great! After this every man there when, in audience, he kissed her hand and humbly bowed before her, would remember how she looked now.

A proud and modest beauty unwillingly immodest is twenty times as charming as a slave. Salome ran out again behind the slave-girls, exhausted, panting, radiant.

"Oh, mother, he promised me anything I chose to ask; anything whatever, even to the half of his kingdom, and confirmed it by an oath. How good of him. What shall I ask?"

"Go back and ask the head of John the Baptist on a platter!"

"Oh, mother, mother, I——"

"His life or mine! Child, would you see me dead? Go back and ask the head of John the Baptist on a platter and stand there till you get it. Then bring it to me."

"A cloak, then——"

"No!"

She came before him in her slim young beauty. She was not dancing now. She could be seen at leisure and in detail. The crowd devoured her. They half rose in their seats.

"What will you have, dear?"

"The head of John the Baptist on a charger."

The crowd sank back. This thing was blood, not beauty. All Syria would rock and reel with this.

Herod called up a councilor or two and whispered swiftly. He was bound by oath to all these men and they to him. Should he publicly break oath to a woman, how could he hold them?

"Go in and dress, child. You shall have it later."

"I stand here till you put it in my hand. You gave an oath, oh, Herod."

"Take something else; anything else at all."

"I stand here till I have it."

Herod looked round at faces. Nobody cared for bare princesses any more. Men fingered swords and muttered.

Then Herod was very sorry; but, for his oath's sake, he made the death-sign to the captain of the guard.

The princess still stood on the steps of the throne. She panted and her knees trembled; sometimes she swayed a little; but she stood. Slowly the tension grew. Nobody thought of lust, now, but of terror. What would the people do? What would God do? The perfumed smoke of many torches rolled up into the vaulted

ceiling and made a cloud there. What if the fingers of a Hand came out and wrote? What if——?

To ease the tension Herod signaled to the choir. The choir-master silently asked what song. Then Herod spoke and, at his voice, every one started.

"The Song of Solomon," said Herod.

The intolerable music, unbearable in sweetness, began. It seemed the last drop. Men gasped in horror. At last a single voice rose above it, wailing like an angel of paradise tormented in Hell.

"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks. Oh, turn away thine eyes!"

Herod shuddered.

"How beautiful are thy feet, oh, prince's daughter. The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy two breasts are like two pomegranates that are twins."

Men turned away their eyes at the shame of it.

"How fair and how pleasant art thou, oh, love, for delights. This is thy stature, like a tower of ivory. My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her and feared her; yea, the queens and the concubines, they praised her. Return, return, oh, Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee. What shall ye see in this Shulamite? She is more terrible than an army with banners."

Unable to bear it longer, Herod lifted his hand for silence. Then silence came. Silence profound. Nobody spoke or turned or moved or even seemed to think. After what seemed a generation, the captain of the guard came in and held before Salome a great silver dish. On it was the head of John the Baptist. As if in a dream Salome lifted one hand and pointed.

"From Herod," she said.

Herod received the dish and looked into John's face.

Slowly, still looking into John's face, he rose, came down the steps of the throne and gave the platter to Salome. As she received, he tilted it until the blood in it ran out upon her, upon her shoulder, and made a smear between her breasts. Herod's two hands were bloody.

Salome turned and shivered. She was looking into John's face now. At last, step by step, still looking into John's eyes and feeling her way before her with her feet like one blindfolded, she passed down the steps, then through the silent standing throng out of the door and gave the great silver platter to her mother.

John died alone, except for the jailor and the soldiers of the guard, for his disciples had left the castle and were sleeping in the town below the palace. A soldier told Bar Ad that he took charge of his own execution, praying silently and then raising his hand for the blow when he was ready. As for Herodias, she set the platter with John's head upon a table and taunted him.

"Ho, Prophet of the Most High God, where is your God who should have saved you? John, John, who held a nation in your hand and called all poor divorced women who want a little happiness 'adulteresses,' there is no God, or else He would have saved you. The head that planned my ruin lies helpless here, fallen before a girl. The tongue that slandered me must stick out now, pierced by a woman's bodkin. It could not save you. The——"

Here the slave-girl who was Bar Ad's informant stole away after the bevy who took Salome out when she turned sick and faint. The last thing that she saw was Herodias, now alone in the chamber, still talking to John's head.

XXIV

John Baptist's death was utterly unexpected. His disciples looked for him to convert Herod; and, lo, he was beheaded. It was more sudden than a shipwreck at sea.

Bar Ad was one of those who begged the body from the jailor and bribed the chief groom for the head, when Herodias had done gloating and ordered it thrown out upon a dunghill. Nobody paid much attention to them. From the moment that Salome made her demand and stood before Herod, waiting, a pall of silence had descended upon every one in Machærus except Herodias. The servants and soldiers moved around next day like men in dreams and the guests went home almost without remark or comment.

Carefully, quietly and by night, John's disciples carried the body to the nearest school of the brotherhood. There they buried it, but not in a cave. Out on the tip of a far-flung buttress of the Judean hills, with scouts thrown out to keep off watchers and only stars for torches, they went through the ritual for burial of a Nazarite. Bar Ad, as John's best friend, made the required answers—varied a little, now, to show, beyond the shadow of mistake, that he represented One who is our Friend also. They placed John's body in the grave at last, in due and ancient form, went through the ritual of resurrection but did not raise it, filled in the grave by handfuls and, man by man, filed away weeping; leaving Bar Ad leaning upon his staff to keep the ritual watch at the head till sunrise. From such a watch Jacob came once at Peniel, halting but princely.

Then John's disciples, with Bar Ad leading them,

went to Capernaum and told Jesus. They clamored for civil war. During the day the Twelve came back in pairs. In the suspense and hope of John's last weeks Bar Ad had failed to follow their movements closely. They wished to hear of Herod and of John; so, while each pair went in and talked with Jesus, Bar Ad was held and questioned by the rest. He gave, again and again, the pathetic hopeful details of John's last days with Herod. At last, he asked them:

"What have you been doing?"

"Such things as Israel never saw before," flashed John Lightning. "We cure the sick, the deaf, the lame, the blind. We cast out devils. We have cleansed lepers. We have raised the dead."

"Why did He send you out?"

"Because of Pharisees—the committee of opposition from Jerusalem. They opposed everything. Therefore He scattered us. They stuck to Him. He led them leisurely through our home towns, where we had no power. Then John's death smote us all to silence, and we return for orders."

Simon Peter, when he came out, took Bar Ad home with him.

"It is not right," he said, "for husbands to neglect wives. My wife is fond of her and so is my wife's mother. They await us both!"

Karis met Bar Ad with a certain dewy-eyed eagerness.

"There is no need, Addai, that you should send me money through Shalluq," she protested. "I have my own."

Bar Ad frowned and Karis smiled.

"I had it from you, Addai. I have long kept my savings out of reach of Herod's court. I called them in, sold all my jewels, set aside what I once had from you in the old days at Hippos and, through Chuza, Herod's steward, gave the rest to the poor. I have,

now, nothing in the world but what I took from you. It is enough and to spare."

"Does Jesus approve?"

"I do not know. The women approve. His mother does."

"Let it be so, then. Karis, dear friend, I have no time for marriage now. The fate of all the world turns on the hinges of the next few months and I must be there."

"Will you come back to me as Simon Peter does to his wife?"

"I will. Also, when all is settled and the world is ours, you shall go with me to whatever grandeur the Master keeps for faithful followers."

"Then leave me now. Yet, Addai, I was foul once, soiled once, a shameful thing once, but I am so no longer. Jesus forgave me and you married me, so I am clean. Therefore, my dear lord, kiss me before you go, then kneel and pray with me."

Upon the high hills behind Chorazin, Bar Ad fought out that night in prayer and fasting; though not for Karis. It was a far deeper thing; the age-old conflict between the two religions, the fasting and stern self-discipline and prayer of John and the joyous resting of Jesus upon God our Father's forgiving love. He came to no conclusion. He could not reconcile the two.

The last pair of the Twelve came in next morning. Capernaum was congested with Passover pilgrims; for Herod had kept John in prison nearly a year and it was Passover again. Any spark would flash that seething mass of anger into insurrection; so, about noon, Jesus put the Twelve into a boat and went across the lake. Bar Ad, in silence, came along. The Pharisees' committee stayed behind, for it was made up of elderly, dignified, fat men who could not run with the multitude. The Passover multitude ran along the beach and met them when they landed, "Like sheep

without a shepherd," as Jesus said. Then He began to teach them.

He preached too long. The afternoon passed in what seemed a breath. Therefore the Twelve were troubled for they had learned how to handle crowds and knew that people should be dismissed to buy food and find sleeping-places before twilight. They said so.

"Feed them yourselves," said Jesus and went on.

The Twelve searched girdles, consulted with Judas the treasurer and found they had the equivalent of two hundred drachmæ. They asked:

"Shall we go buy bread and give it to them to eat?"

"How many loaves have you? Go and see."

Andrew was mate. He hunted up the cabin-boy and sent him down to the boat to search the bread-locker.

Under the two successive interruptions the Master gave it up and closed His speech. He was teaching the Twelve a great lesson in faith. He did not allow preventable emergencies to rise without having a way to meet them. He knew what He would do. Men who had just learned how to manage crowds were trying to instruct Him. The situation had elements of humor. He saw, enjoyed, and took the necessary steps to heighten them, for He asked Philip:

"Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

Philip lived in Bethsaida Julias, the nearest town, and could reasonably be asked about the bake-shops there. He ran his eyes over the crowd and answered miserably:

"Two hundred drachmæ of bread is not enough for every one of them to have a little."

Just then the boy came back and Andrew reported: "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes. There is no more unless we go buy food for all these people."

"Give them to me and make the crowd sit down."

They seated them by fifties and by hundreds, about five thousand. The groups, in their many-colored garments, looked like flower-beds on the green grass. Jesus said grace over the loaves and fishes, broke them and gave them to the Twelve to distribute. When all had had enough each helper filled his haversack from the pile still undistributed.

Everything passed so quietly that it was not until all saw the Twelve fill haversacks that they realized what had happened. Then it burst upon them that this was a tremendous miracle, a fit answer to the murder of John. An army with food of this sort, like Moses' army which lived on manna, could sweep the world. Men, here and there, began to shout. Then, apostles and all, apostles first of all, they swept in a cheering flood, to take and make Him King.

How many short sharp orders it took to stop them, how many crisp commands, as stinging as a whip-lash, brought His own party out from them, Bar Ad never knew. Not many. Jesus constrained His disciples to enter into the boat and sent them across the lake, while He Himself turned back into the hills. Then the crowd left Him; for they saw that He went to pray.

The disciples of John Baptist in the crowd gathered around Bar Ad, for he was their nearest approach to a leader. He took them half a mile in another direction into the hills. By this time it was dark and a great wind blew. Their talk together was therefore words only, without personalities or faces; voices coming, in various intonations, from dim shapes in the blackness.

"Now we shall get our hands on Herod's throat."

"Jesus has always said 'It seems to me' and 'Thank you' and 'If you please' until I did not think Him fit to rule; but did you hear Him give orders to the Twelve? Now I know He can command men."

"He should have taken kingship at our hands, at once."

"Not so. This overturns the world for ever. So great a thing can not ignore our God. Jesus does well to pray."

"Oh, if John were but here."

"I am John's best friend and act for him," said Bar Ad crisply. "When Jesus accepts the kingship of the world Herod's troops will strike. We must have men enough to hold them until we can take to the hills. There are about fifty of us here. Jesus will rejoin the disciples at Capernaum when He has prayed. He will walk around the lake or take boat and cross it to-morrow. Herod wants to see Him. He will leave Capernaum quickly to avoid an interview. Yet He can not leave on the Sabbath. He will speak. Jairus always asks Him now. Therefore everything comes to a head in Capernaum synagogue on Sabbath morning, day after to-morrow, at question-asking after the sermon. There we will give Him the kingship of the world. Gather into five groups of ten men each."

They did so.

"Each group choose a leader."

They did so.

"Each man go now and bring ten others armed with staves and swords, ready to protect Israel's king."

"There may be spies here, Bar Ad."

"If there are spies, let them tell Herod. It is lawful to gather into groups at Passover and to go armed. Meet me in the market-place at Capernaum, in front of the synagogue, half an hour before prayer on Sabbath, each with ten men. Be prepared to wait. Report to your leader first. Learn his name now. Scatter along the lakeside. Cross to-morrow."

"Bar Ad, all men know you for John's friend.

Give us some sign that we may show and we will bring you legions. Without a sign we can do nothing."

"It is dark. A great wind blows. I have no means to write."

"Without a written sign we can not go."

"I am a scribe. I have papyrus, pen and inkhorn," volunteered a voice.

"Behind this wall is shelter from the wind," called a second, "and I have tinder, flint and steel."

"My wife is with me. She has nard in an alabastron," suggested a third.

In an incredibly short time they had a strip of linen, soaked in nard, lighted and hanging from an alabastron. By its uncertain perfumed light Bar Ad wrote five commissions; there was no more papyrus. They ran:

"Authority to enlist men to stand against Herod.
(Signed) Addai bar Ad, John Baptist's friend.

He sealed them with his thumb dipped in the ink.

"Now," prayed Bar Ad, "may Israel's God, whom we will make the God of all the world, go with you."

They sank like shadows into darkness.

Jesus was praying somewhere in the hills. Bar Ad, too, prayed; but he had watched and prayed all the night before. Therefore he soon wrapped himself in his cloak and, lying in the lee of the wall, slept sweetly.

Next morning Capernaum was seething. The story of the loaves and fishes thundered through all its streets. Then came the news that Jesus had rejoined His disciples on the lake, at the height of the storm, and was now healing in Bethsaida. The furious committee of opposition hurried there and made protest because He had given the multitude, eating the miraculous loaves and fishes, no chance to wash their hands.

Jesus had borne with the committee almost meekly. Now He turned on them in a denunciation worthy of John.

"He grows kingly," said the multitude, nodding: "He grows kingly."

Next morning the market-place was thronged with Bar Ad's disciples of John, nearer a thousand than five hundred. Jesus preached in the synagogue. As many as could find room crowded in.

In every synagogue the crowd asked questions after the sermon. Bar Ad, speaking for John's disciples, rose and asked:

"Master, how did you get here?"

Jesus answered: "You seek me . . . because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. . . . Labour not for meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto ever lasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . ."

"What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

"Believe on him whom He hath sent."

"What sign shewest thou then . . . Our fathers did eat manna in the desert." . . .

". . . The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

"Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Then Jesus began a speech surpassing in importance even the Sermon on the Mount. When He began men expected Him to use miracles for military ends and believed that not only the throne of David and the Roman Empire but even the dictatorship of the human race was His for the taking. When He ended, disgusted men, swearing under breath, poured out of the synagogue saying: "He is crazy."

Bar Ad pushed to the door and collected his commissions from four of his lieutenants. They all said: "The man's a maniac. It's all over." One added:

"He advocates eating human sacrifice." The bearer of the fifth commission had gone out before Bar Ad reached the door.

Bar Ad waited until Jesus came, then fell into step beside Him.

"Master," he said, "John Baptist said we would reject you, not you us."

"There was a certain father who had many sons, all rebellious. The eldest son said: 'Father, help me to smite my brethren and I will obey you and force them to obey you also.' What did that father say, Addai?"

Bar Ad thought of his own father and more than one scene with Simon and unwillingly answered:

"He said: 'Son, they are all thy brethren and my children.' "

XXV

Just before Passover, in the year 28, John Baptist dominated Herod, while Jesus, in full tide of a magnificent popularity, rode on to kingship. Just after Passover John was dead while Jesus, discredited, hastened to the Phœnician border, leaving behind a nation which hoped swiftly to see Him dead, as John.

Bar Ad, plodding the Galilean roads with the Apostles, discussed in every aspect that bread-of-life speech, for it had cost a kingdom; perhaps had even thrown away a world. Also, he meditated. If Karis had been at Machærus, Salome might not have danced. If Salome had not danced John would be alive and triumphant. If John were living, the miracle of the loaves and fishes would not have happened. Without the loaves and fishes, Jesus lacked cause to make the bread-of-life speech.

"I think He's insane," exploded Judas of Kerioth. "Just crazy; but, since you others stay, I won't desert a crazy chief."

"He has some wise meaning," disagreed John bar Zebedee—John Lightning, "only we do not understand it."

"I know He is not crazy," asserted Bar Ad. "We of the desert grow to know a madman when we see one. They have a certain light around them."

"A little more and you'll be crazy, too," sneered Judas of Kerioth.

"Oh, no," soothed John Lightning. "I know what Bar Ad means—but what does Jesus mean?"

"To make us eat," insisted Bar Ad.

"Eat what?" flashed John Lightning.

"It is the ancient wisdom of the Nazarites, drawn

from the prophets, that every sacrifice points to Messiah and gains its power from Him; and so, in some faint far-off but real sense, becomes his flesh. He plans a better sacrifice."

"You find some way," John Lightning smiled, "by which He can mean what He says and yet be sane. We all knew that before. We do not understand Him but we trust Him. He will explain in time."

"Addai bar Ad," called some one from behind.

They turned and faced a horseman, one of Shalluq's men, who pulled up in a cloud of dust with a stiff-armed salute and gave Bar Ad a letter from Shalluq, inclosed in one from Karis. With a glance round for permission, Bar Ad unwrapped the linen covering. The first read:

"Karis to Addai—Bring the dears to me as soon as may be. In haste. With love!"

The other:

"Shalluq, of Jerusalem and Sepphoris, to Addai bar Ad at the house of Simon bar Jonas, at Bethsaida, greeting—

"Know that Lucius Curius Minucius, a Roman knight, with Byssus, his steward, has come by ship to Cæsarea and inquires of bankers there for Lucius Curius Thaddeus, once of Armageddon. Come to our warehouse at Sepphoris, where I will fetch them from Cæsarea."

"Tell the Master that a friend in distress needs me," said Bar Ad to John Lightning. Then he spoke to the messenger: "Give me your horse and follow on foot to Sepphoris. It is not far."

The mighty city Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, was the only really great city between Alexandria and Antioch. It filled the space between Cana and Nazareth with streets and houses, so that those ancient villages

were both its suburbs. When Jesus went to the wedding at Cana He passed through a great crowded city. Instead of "Jesus of Nazareth" the mob might just as truthfully have called Him "Jesus of Sepphoris." They did not, because Nazareth means "branch" and so the name they gave Him is a pun alluding to the long-foretold "Branch of David's family tree" who shall rule the world.

Shalluq, at Sepphoris, lived over his warehouse, a great shadowy busy place which smelled of figs, camels and raisins. Bar Ad raced up the stairs, through an atrium and triclinium, and into a tiny, awning-covered courtyard-porch, one side of which gave on the street. There he paused, smiling.

"Victims of Venus!" laughed a jovial old voice which broke a little. "Who is this savage?"

"Minucius!"

"Addai!"

They embraced shamelessly.

"Addai, you are no longer hard," rejoiced Byssus, coming in for his share of embraces. "I had faith, lad, I had faith; but what has changed you?"

"Jesus of Nazareth, Byssus. You shall hear later."

Byssus had grown noticeably older, but Minucius, though his grizzled hair was now white, seemed sturdier than ever. "I drink less, boy," he explained, "since Nark is dead; and now I share with Byssus." They spent at least an hour in reminiscences and inquiry about friends, the thrill of meeting was so strong in them.

"Addai," said Minucius seriously, at last, "I do not know your burdens, but we have lost that half your fortune which was left to us and also what belonged to Nark, and come a-begging. We have no claim on you—no claim except affection. Though at Byssus' advice, I repudiated you to save my life, we have both loved you. We are now almost penniless

and too old to make a living. As you advised, Byssus became my steward. I gave up the villa and took rooms again, and he made the money saved from the wreck of your fortune last all these years. When it drew to an end we tried to use my privilege as a Roman knight and farm taxes. They skinned us, lad. They flayed us! *Mehercule,* our Roman knights out-vulture eagles. We had to sell Byssus' share of the lanista to save our freedom. We are both strong. We are likely to live years, if we can find some way to keep on eating. I might have drawn the dole and shared with Byssus—and will go back and do so yet if you are too cramped to take care of us—but man needs more than meat. 'There is a boy,' we said to each other, 'who, if he can, will give us bread and a little wine and some small corner in sunny Galilee, who will come and see us now and then and close our eyes when we are done with life and even, perhaps, weep for us.' So we, with what poor remnants of your wealth were left, took ship; and here we are."

Addai's face worked. "We will do better than that, my fathers," he smiled, and gave a hand to each.

Minucius was as worldly-wise as Byssus and cynical as most Romans, but the protective mail-shirt of his cynicism dropped at this. As for Shalluq, he was both touched and angry.

"Minucius," he protested, "you play my boy as a harpooner plays a dolphin—although, to do you justice, you speak truth."

"The simple truth, Shalluq. Of course I play him like an angler, but not for money. We really can go back to Rome and live on the dole. 'Tis for affection, Shalluq, for affection—and he has proved pure gold; yea, better, for he opens hand, heart and purse—and I once cast him off."

"It was to save your life," excused Bar Ad, putting a hand on Minucius's shoulder: "and, as it was, your

letter of renunciation, worded as a warning, put me on guard and so saved mine."

"I thought of that, boy, and hoped your enemies might deliver it. Have you repaid your brother Simon yet?"

"No; first out of affection for Shalluq, here, later because I was busy with better things, and last because of this same Jesus of Nazareth. He has a wild strange doctrine of forgiveness and says in due time God takes care of vengeance."

"He is no Roman, then. You feel that He has kept you from growing hard? Tell us about Him."

Then Bar Ad launched into the story of his last ten years. He had a sympathetic audience. The three old men who loved him hung on his words as suitors hear a girl. Reminding each one of their talks with him as to what would happen to the world when Rome broke, he told them of his search for ascetic wisdom among the Nazarites, now sadly ended by the death of John, and how he had found no solution of the world's riddle hidden in prayer and fasting. Then, beginning with the story of the Magi, he gave the golden history of Jesus up to the last catastrophe at Capernaum. Day died to scarlet sunset and then to purple night and Shalluq ordered in wine and torches, and still they begged him to continue. Then, when he had finished his forecast for the future, showed them the world as it might be under Messiah and named the dark shadows of the dangers that stood between, he ceased, and old Minucius rose and stretched his shoulders.

"I am an old man, lad," he said, "of little use except, perhaps, to die; but if you can use me, or show me how to use myself, to help these things come true, death shall not stop me. As for this eating which so troubles you, He is the World-Physician and plans some medicine to cure sick souls; that's all. As for

His enemies, that's easily arranged. Persuade old sick Tiberius that Galilee has a Physician who can cure him and he will pry Him from the hands of priests with all the Roman legions."

"That idea is practical," confirmed Shalluq, after a moment's thought.

"*Habet,*" swore Byssus, using the oath by which a gladiator marks the death of an adversary and his own triumph: "I told you once, Addai, that if your Messiah came and you did not know Him, the whole wide world would rise and take Him from you."

"My fathers, should you never help again, you earn a lifetime's care by this one idea," rejoiced Bar Ad. "Who cares who is Emperor. The world obeys the office, not the man. When Tiberius, ripe and full of years, goes hence, Jesus shall step into his vacant throne and own the earth, no man opposing. Yet, I have one regret; for, great as is the plan, it parts us for a time."

"How so?" asked Minucius.

"I see," nodded Byssus. "We must go back and use every avenue of approach to reach and persuade Sejanus and Tiberius. It can be done. The lady Julia and her friends are married, now, to Sejanus' henchmen. I wish Astarte were alive. She would have done it with a word. We must see Jesus, though, cure many and with our own eyes."

"I hesitate to use such means as Julia to such an end," reflected Bar Ad. "When you see Jesus you will understand."

"I understand already," mused Minucius, "and you do not. Those poor, bad, pretty children, Addai, have done their best. They have no real love for the lust they live in. Who would not be clean if she could? From what you have told of Jesus I am already sure He would understand and forgive."

"Wait," interposed Byssus, "there is another thing.

From what Addai tells us of the prophets and mysteries and the two thousand years of preparation, this Jesus is either a man who, knowing all Addai knows of the Messiah, has falsely thrust Himself forward into the place, or else He is a God—nay, *the* God. If He be God He plans some greater thing than merely Empire; something that reaches into the very marrow of men's bones, and deals in power with the future and with death. The gods are dreams but the One God is real and His imperial sway covers not merely earth, from which His children die and leave Him, but conquers death and triumphs everywhere, for ever. If God plan some tremendous movement forward for mankind He may not thank us for our interference to save His life and bring Him before an Emperor."

"If a child brought you his best toy for a gift," smiled old Minucius, "you might not take the toy but you would thank the child. Let us help Addai make Jesus safe, so far as can be done, from every danger, and let the Son of God Himself decide what He will do."

Next morning Minucius and Byssus joined Bar Ad and Shalluq, insofar as Gentiles could, in keeping Passover. The meal itself was eaten by Bar Ad with Shalluq and such of his servants as had no families and remained in Sepphoris; but, after it, the two joined Byssus and Minucius in the courtyard. Since it was Passover they spoke of God. "Talk, Byssus," begged Bar Ad. "You are the best-instructed man among us. Talk, as you did once when I was waiting in the arena. What is your religion?"

"About the same as yours, lad," answered Byssus. "I believe in God but not in the gods; just as you believe in God but not in the fine-spun web in which the Pharisees have caught your nation. God made the world make itself. Therefore He has common sense and would no more tolerate your caste-system than He would our lustful Olympian deities. Both are the dreams of

men; yet, men must dream. We are not made for threescore years and ten and one small neighborhood of earth alone. I have killed many men, but never one but was surprised to die; then that which was surprised left them and went elsewhere. It was surprised because it was immortal. We dream because there is that in us which is too great for earth and feels akin to heaven. Time does not touch it. I have had four bodies in my day—an infant's, a child's, a young man's and this wrinkled thing in which I live to-day. I have gained much experience; yet I myself am much the same as when I toddled along the streets of Carthage. If I can live in four bodies, why not in none? Some dull men say we can not prove that the soul lives after death. We can not prove it does not live. Where evidence is equal on both sides, I choose the sunny one; and, here, it is not equal; for, as we know the sun will rise to-morrow yet can not prove it, so something in us knows we shall live always.

"There is, then, an Eternal Holy God and a deathless soul. Therefore they meet. What do I care how or where? If the soul be impure when it sees God, it can not bear Him nor He it. You yourself told us, Addai, fasting and prayer, yea, and a prophet's vision, are not the road to purity. Even by these we can not cleanse ourselves. They did not keep John Baptist from his pride nor lead him to join Jesus. Power they give, and power, but not purity. Therefore God, not in His unveiled Holiness but hidden, somehow, must come down to earth, must cleanse us while we are still in the flesh. I think it might be done by love—not love of man for woman, but such as we three feel for you, lad, and you for us—love and forgiveness. If Jesus be this hidden God come down, He plans a thing so much greater than the dictatorship of earth we almost wrong Him, Addai, even to think of Him as Emperor."

"Would you, then, give up plans to safeguard Him?"

"Oh, no. Minucius is right. We will serve as we can and He will take what He needs of our service."

As soon as travel was possible after Passover Bar Ad sent a mounted messenger for Karis while he himself went into accounts with Shalluq. He had avoided this for ten years, just as he had avoided staying in the same house with Karis for perhaps ten weeks; but now he must face both these duties. He found that Shalluq had paid off the money advanced by Ad bar Ad and had, for years, returned Addai's profits to the business, so that he owned the house and warehouse at Sepphoris, another at Jerusalem, and cleared enough to live on amply. There was, however, little loose money with which to bribe Sejanus, and the lump sum for which the business could be sold was ridiculously small compared with its yearly income. When Shalluq realized the need for cash he hemmed and hawed for a long time, got up and sat down, walked restlessly around, looked out of the window, left the room aimlessly and came back. Bar Ad stopped reading documents, lay back and watched him, smiling. At last he spoke. "Say it, man, say it," he twinkled, "or you will die."

"I hoped for old age free from such disaster as Byssus and Minucius have met," groaned Shalluq, "but after all, I may die before my earning-power is gone and, if you live, you will take care of me. If my poor savings will help the King——" He named a lump-sum. Bar Ad rose and put his right arm over Shalluq's shoulders.

"Jesus is well served here to-day," he answered gravely. "If necessary I will call on you; but, we may find some other way."

"There is another way, my Lord Addai," hesitated Shalluq, "only—only—it is closed to me and open to you, and puts your brother Simon in your hands to torture as you will."

"Show me."

Shalluq unlocked an iron-bound chest and took from it two papyri. One read:

"Simon bar Ad of Armageddon, to Shalluq at Jerusalem, greeting—

"Know that, when Bar Abbas, the robber, demands of thee money in my name, he has been paid."

The other:

"A copy.

"Received of Simon bar Ad ten thousand sestertia for the murder of Addai bar Ad, his brother.

"(Signed) BAR ABBAS."

"I judge Bar Abbas tried a little blackmail on Simon after I was gone and, failing, sent you this receipt in jesting revenge."

"Exactly. Neither papyrus, by itself, is incriminating. Simon acknowledged the debt but did not name the service. Bar Abbas' receipt might be false. The two together are damning. I never told your father. He had enough to bear. Chuza, Herod's steward, is a just man. These, with your testimony and mine, if laid before him, would send Simon to the galleys and give you the estate. The threat of that will bring you any money Simon has."

"Did you not tell me that his son died and that he has no other?" asked Bar Ad, pouching the papers.

"True, and will have no other. His right side is half dead—paralyzed, like your father's. You have no need of revenge, Addai. In fact, this overreaches revenge, for it will kill him. Therefore I never gave it to you."

"Why 'therefore,' Shalluq?"

"Do you think I enjoyed his trying to kill my boy? I let him live and suffer."

"Shalluq, shall I use this to spare your savings and my own?"

There was another long silence. Shalluq got up, sat down, and paced the room again. Sweat stood out on his forehead. At last he decided:

"Addai, it is unsavory. Use it only if our two fortunes are too small. Simon is head of the house of Ad, and I would not have the King guarded by blackmail."

The next day Karis came, starry-eyed and dancing and, with her, sunbeams. She scarcely seemed twenty. She kissed the three old men, arms around neck, because Addai loved them. "My husband sent for me," she fluted, and did a happy little dance before them. She sat on the arm of Minucius' chair and tripped around the house, singing. By Shalluq's invitation she presided at dinner and, at a hint from Minucius, demanded to be taken into council. She praised their plan of safe-guarding Jesus, but added to it.

"There are three powers," she counted on small pink fingers, "which can kill Jesus—Pilate, Herod and Annas; for Annas, though Rome has rightly taken from him the power of inflicting legal death, controls Sicarii, knife-men, assassins. Why guard against Pilate only? My fathers, set your wits to work. What can hold Pilate till the order comes from Rome? What can hold Herod? What Annas? Annas loves money. Keep money from him and you touch him in the raw. Addai, could not your Magi stop payments to the temple from Jews in Babylon? Shalluq, there must be other rich men in Jerusalem, enemies of Annas. I have heard of Joseph of Arimathea and of Nicodemus as the two richest. Search out both. Herod is in disgrace at Rome for his war with Aretas of Petra. Aretas' daughter hates Herodius and, if told, would protect Jesus. Jesus cured little Simon bar Chuza, the son of Herod's steward. Chuza will protect Jesus. That leaves only Pilate unrestrained until the order comes. Use your brains, Romans. Find some way to hold Pilate."

"At least, my dear, I will adopt Addai once more, before a Roman magistrate at Cæsarea, and take the consequences if there are any. That will make him a Roman knight again and give him access to Pilate," said Minucius. "People think long before they harm a Roman knight!" Karis glided over and kissed him.

"I may need some protection," laughed Bar Ad, and told about the missing commission which he had signed and failed to recover. It meant death if it fell into Herod's hands and Herod would pay well for it. All Bar Ad knew of the holder was that he was a little red Jew of Jerusalem named Jochanan bar Kaphar; and that he still held it, for there had been no arrest. Shalluq undertook to inquire. The outer court of the temple was center of all Jewish news and Shalluq could learn all rumors known to the money-changers.

"Now I will leave you to perfect these plans," yawned Karis at last. "Come when you're ready, Addai." She kissed them all good night and danced away to her bedroom with a glance over her shoulder at Addai which made them all tingle.

"Addai," smiled old Minucius, "she is the most beautiful thing that ever happened upon earth. May you have daughters."

"She is as good as she is beautiful," answered Addai, "and as wise in sin as any one of us. She hates false pretense. She whispered to me to make sure you know her story"—and he told it.

"You say He did not deny her sins nor minimize them nor condone them?" Byssus summed up: "He just forgave them? Oh, what a man!"

"Addai," remarked Minucius, "I was raised by a couple of elder sisters and therefore am a woman-hater and now unmarried; but if you had denied that woman the protection of our name I would have given it."

Bar Ad found Karis dressed as a bride should be, and halted, startled. She read his face and said:

"Put down your staff and sheepskin, Addai. Fold your arms and stand before me. Are we married?"

"Safely, securely, soundly. I saw to that."

"Tell me again that Jesus permits marriage."

"He does. One woman to one man, for life, is His clean order."

"Are you repelled by what—what He forgave?"

"No, child. That is past and gone for ever."

"Do I lack beauty?"

"You are more beautiful than ever before."

"How long since you have been alone with a woman?"

"Not since I left Rome. The priests in an Egyptian temple, once, sent in a golden priestess to my cell. It was part of the ritual. I might enjoy her without blame and stay in a lower rank; or resist her and pass on to higher initiation. I thought of you and would have none of her."

"Was she beautiful?"

"Not quite as beautiful as you, but nearly."

"Addai, we're married. The maids here all envy me and the men you. There is no spice or shadow of wrong-doing in this"—and she made a pretty little gesture that called attention to her whole appearance. "If I did all that horrid, lovely, golden-brown priestess must have done to draw you to her and the whole world knew, it would approve, not blame me. My duty as a woman is to you. Is that the trouble—that there is no spice of wrong-doing in our love?"

"No, rosy Karis."

"Look, Addai; am I not fair, white, shapely, nay, adorable? Why am I not in your arms? No!"—and she lifted a little warning hand—"I will not tempt you as the Egyptian priestess did. You are wise, Addai, and surpassing kind. Therefore you have a reason and a good one; but, for our mutual lifelong happiness, I ought to know it. What is it, Addai?"

"It is the same which I told you, Karis. Know, wife, that for more than seven years I have lived as if there were no woman in the world or in man's thoughts. As near as one who once was foul may be, I have grown pure in heart. The prize is power. Jesus does miracles and says Himself His followers shall do greater. His Twelve do miracles at His gift, yet only John has so much brain as I, and none of them has half my driving power. I know how the thing is done—by prayer, through continence, after fasting. When it is done, then I shall come to you and we will live togther happily all our long lives; but, until it is done—to lose seven years of such self-discipline as only Nazarites know—the body's the least of it; the difficulty is to rule the thoughts—bear with me, Karis."

"There is no other woman, Addai?"

"No. You are my lifelong love."

"I see you need a mother, not a wife, just now, boy. Well, Addai, since there is no other woman, you have earned and double-earned the right to have what you want. I love you well enough to wait your pleasure. Lay your great staff upon the bed between us and leave it there. For the time being, we will forget that I am a woman, and I will be only your comrade and your good friend."

XXVI

Karis and her three old friends spent hours every day reviewing and perfecting plans.

"I love these dear men," laughed Karis privately, "though I belong to you. Are you jealous of them, Addai?"

"No, dear. They are too kindly and too old. Do as you like."

When a lovely young woman deliberately sets out to enslave graybeards there is no limit to her power; for she can be by turns friend, daughter and sweetheart and need not mind proprieties. She asked their histories and their advice, embraced and nestled up to them, sat shamelessly upon their knees and kissed them with twinkling side-glances at Addai. She owned them in an hour. Within a day they would have died for her. Because Minucius was a Roman knight she made him escort her to Herod's palace, leading the white sumpter-mule she had ridden away. They returned with four slaves bearing two great chests of her garments, left there. These she robbed ruthlessly of ornaments, bringing a great bag to Minucius.

"These are what maids want money for," she smiled. "These are better to bribe women with than gold. They give more pleasure and are not so costly. Here are carved ivory medallions from Cathay, with jade, and also perfumed gold embroidery—a dozen panels. Here are flawed rubies from beyond Hind; of little worth, but beautiful; with green bezoar-stone also. Here is embroidery of seed-pearls from Ceylon. Here is a shawl from Kashmir scented with musk and veils from Calicut—cobwebs and moonbeams. Here are misshapen pearls from Persia, no use as jewels, with crystal phials

of attar of roses, carved jet from the Oxus, turquoise and agate belt-ornaments, breast-guards of carved crystal—no jewels—nothing too costly for a gift to a good woman, all beautiful enough to please a bad one—the pick of the caravans from the East for a dozen years. The chests hold silk costumes from Samarkand and linens from Egypt and from Hind. With these, given one at a time and with a compliment to women, you might almost buy your way into Olympus. Use them to get news of the Good Physician to great Tiberius."

" 'Tis done already," laughed Minucius. "Victims of Venus—of whom I am now one—how can you bear to part with all these beauties, Beauty?"

"I can't," laughed and cried Karis. "I couldn't—except"—and here she grew first grave, then reverent—"except that they may help a bit to make Him safer."

"I see," nodded Minucius, "and I will use them carefully and singly, like drops of precious ointment poured slowly from a phial one by one, each where it does most good."

Along with the chests Karis brought news. A chamberlain and a trumpeter, with a ten of spears, had come from King Agbarus of Edessa, bearing a letter to Jesus of Nazareth, and they were waiting at Herod's palace for news of His whereabouts. Edessa was an independent city-state, very rich, small and densely-peopled, on the edge of the Roman Empire, next to Armenia and about three hundred miles from Dekapolis.

"He has vanished northward into Phœnicia," explained Bar Ad.

"He will circle past Baneas and come down into Dekapolis," amended Karis. "Mary, His mother, knows."

"I met Agbarus of Edessa, once," reflected Bar Ad slowly. "He entertained me courteously. Therefore I will go tell his messengers."

The end of it was that Byssus and Minucius, with King Agbarus' messengers as escort and Bar Ad as guide, took Karis back to Capernaum a few days later, then left her there and rode on round the north end of the lake into Dekapolis in search of Jesus—or else, which came to the same thing, of a certain "Saneman," whom people said Jesus had sent there to announce His coming. Saneman was the first Christian missionary. His sending antedated that of the Apostles.

They found him easily, because he made a noise around him. They came upon him haranguing a group in a village market-place. He was a tall, strong, intelligent man, dressed in evident but humble imitation of John Baptist. As they rode up, he thundered:

"Jesus is not insane. How can the mad cure madmen? He cured me. I hide my name and take the name of 'Saneman' because my madness was foul as well as crazy. I am that maniac who lived in a tomb and closed the lake-shore path beyond Gadara. Five thousand swine stampeded at my cure and ran into the lake. The poor foolish people begged Him to go away and heal no more madmen, for fear more pigs should drown. Once cured, I was more sane than they. I tried to follow Him. He sent me, instead, to go from town to town through the Dekapolis and tell what great things God has done for me. Some day He will come here and cure the demonized, and not a pig shall perish."

Saneman knew nothing of Jesus but, hearing Bar Ad's information, went with them to the northwest corner of Dekapolis; for they agreed Jesus must come down Jordan. They were but just in time. Scattering out their troopers among the border-villages for news, one tore back in an hour with stories of a leper cleansed, a devil cast out and a sick child cured, so that they trailed Jesus with little trouble. They found Him in a town market-place, in the old familiar tumult of cure

after cure, with hundreds round Him, His back against a wall, while the disciples, acting as guard to take the pressure, passed the sick and insane before Him and the cured away as swiftly as might be.

"Jesus of Nazareth!" shouted Saneman, between laughing and crying, when he saw Him, and ran and knelt at His feet, "Lord, Lord, I did my best—poor, but my best. In the ten cities and their villages there's not a town I have not told of you. Now, may I follow?"

"Tell them to come, instead. Take help and spread the news; then follow."

Agbarus' chamberlain, having some sense of the dramatic, held back the Romans with Bar Ad and the trumpeter, till all his troopers joined him. Then he rode up in column, cleaving his way through the crowd by blasts from a silver trumpet, spread out his men, dismounted and knelt at Jesus' feet, holding up Agbarus' letter wrapped in saffron silk, while Minucius, as man of highest rank in the party, explained its purport. The letter, written in Greek on vellum, ran:

"Agbarus, King of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Savior, near Jerusalem, greeting—

"I have heard reports of Thee and Thy cures, performed without medicines; that Thou dost cause the blind to see again, the lame to walk, cleansest lepers, castest out devils, healest those tormented by long disease and dost raise the dead. I conclude either that Thou art God descended from Heaven to do these things, or else that Thou art the Son of God. Therefore I have written to entreat thee to visit me and heal the disease with which I am afflicted. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against Thee and plot to injure Thee; I have, however, a very small but noble kingdom which is sufficient for us both."

Then Jesus smiled and answered:

"Blessed art thou, oh Agbarus, who, without seeing,

hast believed. For it is written concerning me that those who have seen me will not believe, that they who have not seen may believe and live. In regard to what thou hast written that I should come to thee, it is necessary that I should fulfill all things here for which I was sent and, after that, to be received up again by Him that sent me. But, after I have been received up, I will send a certain one of my disciples, that he may heal thy affliction and give life to thee and to those with thee."

The chamberlain was a scribe and set down the answer afterward, from memory, but accurately, at least as to thoughts.

Jesus refused the customary gifts Agbarus sent. The party watched Him for two days and listened to His teaching. Then the chamberlain and his men went thoughtfully back to Edessa, and Bar Ad and his guests returned joyfully to Karis. Before they left, Minucius and Byssus joined the line of sick and knelt before Jesus but made no request of Him—at least no audible request. Then they discussed Him on their journey.

"At first I was shocked," confessed Minucius. "The man eats and drinks and walks like other men, grows weary and is dusty. He has humor. He never laughs but He smiles often. Sometimes His eyes twinkle. Then, as I took in His teaching, I saw that it must overthrow the world. His cures are nothing in comparison to His teaching. Then, slowly, I grew conscious of a tremendous will. He has more sheer vast will in His little finger than I in my whole body. He leaves us free, but, if He chose to do it, He could will this whole Empire after Him and it would follow."

"I was not shocked at all," commented Byssus. "If God become a man, of course He will do it thoroughly and be a real one. He's better-looking than I thought, and stronger and abler. I felt His will as you did, Minucius, but what impressed me most was His wisdom and His kindness. He does not use His will except to

heal men, because He really cares for our opinions and leaves us free to form them."

"But that is love!" burst out Addai. "Karis does that to me and I to Karis. Do you mean—do you mean, Byssus, that He really loves us?"

"I don't know what I mean," mused Byssus. "I think it must be love—'tis more than friendship. O God on earth, that any one should love me!"

"Nay, I do, Byssus!" blurted Addai; and old Minucius rode closer and laid a quiet hand on Byssus' shoulder.

They found Karis at Simon Peter's and in a gale of wonder and excitement. "I prayed that you might come before he went," she said, sobering for a moment. "Get back upon your horses and ride straight to Chuza. Take me in front of you, Addai."

Chuza, Herod's steward, the informal but real king of Galilee, lived in a pleasant mansion on the lake-shore at Capernaum, though he was rarely at home. On the way, Karis explained:

"When you were gone I prayed, slept, then went to Joanna, Chuza's wife, and told her all about how we would safeguard Jesus. She has long known me at Herod's court and did not like me; but now we love each other. She gave jewels. Better yet, Chuza returned and heard our plans. He redeemed the jewels with money. He promises that, if he should find Minucius all I describe, he will make him one of Herod's correspondents at Rome with station and an income. He leaves again in a few hours. Therefore we hasten."

Chuza was an eagle-faced piercing-eyed Jew of middle age, quietly dressed. He had Minucius' measure in ten minutes, with Byssus' also, and dismissed them with a bill of exchange for Byssus and a letter of appointment for Minucius, Bar Ad engaging to see them promptly and safely off from Cæsarea. That they might understand, he called in his only son, Simon, a

sturdy-limbed bright-eyed boy of ten, and put one arm around him.

"This boy was dying," explained Chuza. "Jesus of Nazareth cured him. Look at him well, therefore, and understand that, for His sake, as you serve Jesus of Nazareth so you serve me. Bribe little. Entertain much. Make friends with Sejanus' freedmen, promising vast rewards, but only when Tiberius is cured. Become Sejanus' companion, if you can, and work through him."

Karis was loath to part with old Minucius. She rode with them wistfully, as far as Sepphoris, where they left her, weeping, in Shalluq's care. "A really beautiful woman," warned Minucius, "ought not to venture among Romans."

During the first ten miles to Cæsarea, Minucius was depressed. The other twenty he rode in growing glory. "Peacocks and purple," he explained, expanding, "for twenty years, except the three spent with you, Addai, I have been old and seedy, with no great hope in life except to cadge a gulp of wine or two and hide the tatters in a tired toga. Now I am a Roman knight with an income, a diplomatic position, an object in life and decent hope of Heaven. I shall return a traveler from the East, bearing great gifts, and make myself the Fashion. Your fate turns on it too, Addai. Should I become known as friendly to Sejanus none dare disturb my son and all old accusations against him fall to the ground. Set me before Sejanus and see me speak. Tiberius himself is not too high for me."

At Cæsarea, which was Roman territory, they arranged passage and put the chests aboard. Minucius had waited on Pilate, coming out, and was sorely tempted to do so again to preen himself upon his changed position; but, for Addai's sake, did not. When all was ready they went before a magistrate and Minucius expansively adopted Addai over again. When it

was done and they were outside the court, he muttered:

"Now, slip to the caravanserai and gallop. That magistrate has heard our names before. In time he will put two and two together. Embrace me, boy, and Byssus; and, for us both, embrace that Karis child."

"But, fathers, I would see you to the ship."

"And come with us in chains and break, thereby, all of our hopes for Jesus? No, boy, go—go—bearing two old men's blessing; and may the gods—may the One God go with you."

At Sepphoris Karis begged to go back to Capernaum on foot, for the frolic of it, because she had always traveled under guard and never had been part of a Galilean crowd. When Bar Ad objected, she made some subtle changes in costume, hair and face and, lo she was a good-tempered, homely, freckled, Greek farmer's wench of forty, with a broken tooth and an Ionian tongue. Shalluq went into amused ecstasies and begged to come along, but she refused because he was a rich old "reprobate" and she a "dacent" woman traveling under escort of this Nazarite to "foind" her husband. Bar Ad predicted trouble. "Your hands and feet, my dear," he gloomed, "are tiny, your hair midnight. I never saw a shapelier woman. You walk as a swan swims. Your voice is like a little golden gong, with overtones of sunlight. You can not hide the purple heaven of your eyes. Your neck is smooth, your breasts are high and crisp under your bodice. Even with that broken tooth, that age, that sunburn and those freckles, you are worth ten, nay, twenty thousand sestertia as you stand."

"I never had so many compliments from you at once, Addai, in all my life before," beamed Karis, "not even at sixteen. Clearly, we must go on."

The great paved road from Sepphoris to Capernaum was always crowded. The population of Galilee was so immense it packed the main roads solid. Seen from a hill, these roads wound like many-colored ribbons

through the landscape. There were no woods to hide them, only closely-cultivated irrigated orchards. The density of population was so great that all the forest-trees had been cut off centuries ago and their roots dug up for fuel.

Sepphoris was not a walled city, but had suburbs, with marble villas. These held Karis' attention for a while, because of their beauty. Then she was amused by a brown goatherd selling milk on the hoof, milking a goat when any passer-by proffered a copper for a draft. Then her attention flitted, in quick succession, to another grim Nazarite who saluted Bar Ad, then to a hard-faced Greek in the dress of a seedy philosopher, evidently coming back, a failure, from Dekapolis, then to a harder-faced one-eyed Greek minstrel, evidently going there. He gripped a weary half-grown Jewish girl dressed as a boy and carrying his harp; and, when she saw the girl's face, Karis shuddered. She relaxed again at meeting a vast good-tempered mountain of female flesh, cleaving a way through the crowd with her tongue and shepherding two homely serving-wenches carrying washing. After them tripped a string of tiny donkeys, led by a grinning farmer and so concealed in stacks of fodder that nothing showed except their great wise ears and eyes and tiny patient hoofs. Then came, in quick succession, camels bearing bales of dry figs and led by sullen Arabs, a half-naked laughing mountebank with a dancing-bear, a group of little boys skylarking, and a great lady on horseback with a glittering guard around her, for whom the crowd made way. They made way, too, for a Rabbi, robed in his talith-shawl with the blue fringes and with a little greasy leather case strapped on his forehead, containing his favorite text from the law. From under the strap his gray hair fell to his shoulders, curled into large greasy Babylonian ringlets behind each ear.

These were outstanding figures. The good-natured

bulk of the crowd were farmers with back-loads of produce, mule-trains with dried dung or even charcoal from shadowy Lebanon for fuel, and long-distance desert-dried caravans, loaded with non-committal, strapped and corded bales from Babylonia, their camels limping slowly down to Cæsarea because Galilee was too stony for great padded feet, suited to sand. The rest was a mass of ordinary Galilean Jews, wearing, on such a sunny day as this, their great gray-blue woolen cloaks rolled up and hung yoke-fashion over their shoulders. Every two hours or so there came shouting down the road, and every one scattered to let by a tearing rider—"Hurricane-posts" the crowd called them—bearing government dispatches. Over all, instead of dust, floated an air of bold good humor and the soft hum of many-voweled Aramaic. Karis plunged her delighted spirit into all this multi-colored mass of merry humanity as a bather plunges into water, and reveled in it.

Romans left Oriental byways to be policed by Oriental princes, but guarded great paved main arteries like this themselves. There were guard-houses here and there on the way; and every few miles a five of cavalry, flashing and blazing in their polished armor like pinchbeck archangels, trotted down the middle of the highway. Bar Ad was half-way to Capernaum and day was more than half-way done—for Karis joyfully lingered—when such a five as this appeared in front just as a hurricane-post, lashing and spurring, tore up from behind. Confused between the two, the bitter fourteen-year-old harp-girl who had passed them earlier in the day and whom they had now overtaken ran into the road and was ridden down. The rider flashed away into the distance without a backward glance and Karis, gasping, ran forward to pick up the child. It was useless. She was quite dead. The intensity of Karis' solicitude struck the decurion as incongruous, and he laughed.

Then Karis blazed. Forgetting her disguise as a decent serving-woman and holding the dead child's head upon her knee, she called upon the Romans to arrest the post-rider, said that they should keep wayfarers safe, not let them be killed, and threatened the five with Herod's vengeance, or, at least, Chuza's. The Roman, with his hand upon his hip, looked at her intently. The crowd, mostly sturdy Galileans, excitable and armed with knives, was beginning to scowl when the decurion, without a moment's warning, struck Bar Ad over the head with the flat of his short sword.

Bar Ad came to and found himself lying beside the dead girl at the side of the road, while the old harper poured water on his face. The crowd was flowing by again, uninterested; Karis and the Romans were gone.

"Where are the woman and the soldiers?" he gasped.

"Out of sight in that fig-orchard. The decurion called out that the woman was an escaped slave, some days missing, and you the lover who had stolen her. That satisfied the crowd. The soldiers took her into the grove five minutes ago to scourge her, before they returned her to her master, because she had been impudent to Romans. They forbade any one to follow."

Bar Ad picked up his staff and staggered up-hill into the fig-orchard on a run. Soon he heard stamping, and then he stooped and slipped from tree to tree. He found Karis, strapped to a tree-trunk. The five Romans, gathered around her cloak spread on the ground, were throwing dice to settle who should first possess her. The game went slowly, because they broke it off much to stare at her. For the same reason they did not see him coming; so that their first news of him was gained from the light that leaped into Karis' face.

Except the soldiers in the cave, these were the first men whom Bar Ad ever took real pleasure in killing. He did not try to spare them, in spite of the possibility that the decurion had spared him. In fact, he could

not; for the fig-branches prevented the sweeping down-rushing blows of the great staff, which stun and do not kill, and forced the use of that side-blow which crushes in the temple. He disposed of one man at the first rush, breaking his neck with a stabbing end-thrust from behind; but, being four to one and armed with shield and sword, the others, even then, did not take him seriously. They scattered to surround him; then, crouching behind their shields, came at him in venomous silence. He feinted, tapped, then, as the shield dropped, struck, and crushed the head of the decurion against a tree-trunk. Escaping through the gap thus left in the deadly circle, he ran, but staggered as he ran, so that they chased him hopefully, forming a column one behind another and gaining on him. When they were separated a little he turned and broke the first man's sword-wrist and then his temple, before the second could come up and then the ankle and temple of the second before the third could reach him. At this, the third man turned and ran for the horses. Bar Ad overtook him, herded him in front of Karis, and smote him down. Then he sat down, panted and felt for his purse. It was gone, though the oiled packet of papers sewn into his sheepskin was still safe. The old one-eyed Greek harper had worked wisely. Addai gasped:

"He's welcome to all I had. His help was worth it."

"Why did you let me come into the crowd?" replied Karis, stamping: "You should have had more sense. It's all your fault. Release me!"

Bar Ad, recalled to action, laughed, huddled Karis into her clothes, gleaned money enough for food from a dead Roman, and hurried away across country, through the orchards, as fast as she could run. At the first irrigation-channel they waded and also at the second, fearing pursuit by hounds. He followed country lanes and took no road till twilight; and so brought her into Bethsaida after midnight, worn-out, draggled, but safe.

XXVII

In the first village in Dekapolis Bar Ad ran across Saneman, who begged aid in news-spreading. The man's story appealed, Jesus had told him to take help, and Bar Ad knew Dekapolis; so they made a round of it together, hasty but exultant, announcing that Jesus had come and telling where He was healing. The whole country turned itself inside out. It was like the first days at Capernaum. They brought their halt, blind, sick, insane and lepers. They even brought some sick and lame in litters.

In his round with Saneman Bar Ad asked, at Hippos, for some of those young people He had known. Most were dead. The average life in the Roman Empire was only twenty years. Kleomenes, however, was alive, though he had sold his town-house and retired to his estate. He heard of the inquiries, for he sent Melas, next afternoon, to beg that Bar Ad come and see him. Melas was as depressed and silent as ever, but let out, as they rode back together, that Kleomenes was very ill. They found him in an ebony-and-silver bed with a silk coverlet, in the great central room of the farmhouse. There was a little clear place in front, but the space under the bed and all the rest of the room was packed and darkened, in a long slant to the ceiling, with tons and tons of clean sweet-smelling straw, which covered all the windows.

"Hail, Addai bar Ad, old enemy and friend," rejoiced Kleomenes. " 'Twas good of you to come."

"You *must* be ill, Kleomenes," laughed Bar Ad, "to give thanks for a favor. How goes the poetry?"

"I hear that you are great in Israel, now, have been John Baptist's right-hand man and walk with Jesus.

Melas, bring wine and food and flute-girls. Spread a small table for Bar Ad alone. Serve me in bed. Bring torches."

The girls came with food; three exceedingly beautiful girls, pathetically terrified. They did not kneel, as flute-girls should, but huddled together in the clear space, standing.

"Bar Ad," said Kleomenes, "you have changed. You look like a young hawk. Do you now care for dancing-girls? I remember when you owned the dozen shapeliest young beauties in Hippos."

"These are exquisite," pronounced Bar Ad, "especially this slender gold-rosebuds-and-snow child on the right; yet they do not charm me as such once did, although I have not seen a young girl stripped for dancing since I left Upper Egypt." He turned to Kleomenes and found him pouring a greenish liquid from a little jar into his goblet.

"Medicine," said Kleomenes, "medicine for my illness," and drank it off. "Dance, girls."

They would not, until he made as if to get out of bed; then they danced frantically and for so long that, when they stopped, they staggered.

"Now, watch what makes my household think me mad," smiled Kleomenes. "How can I write a poem about Diana bathing in a waterfall unless I see her do it? Swim, beauties!"

The girls lay on the straw and pretended to swim, rolling, kicking and sprawling unwillingly, as if bathing in water. Kleomenes applauded frantically, then dismissed them.

"Close the door, Addai," begged Kleomenes. "I have now given you food, wine, thanks, and such poor entertainment as my house affords. Have I, so far as we poor mortals may, shown sorrow for ill-treatment in the past? I hear this Jesus of yours tells all His followers to forgive. Forgive me, Addai."

"Kleomenes, since you ask it, fully and frankly I forgive."

"Will you help free my slaves before I die?"

"Certainly, if I can. 'Tis a kind purpose. You do not look like a dying man."

"I am as strong as you. I walk miles o' nights for exercise, look in at windows out of loneliness and pass for a ghost."

"Why speak of death, then?"

"I have long cast about for some one I can trust. I have no friends; you know the Greeks of Hippos. My will is in Bar Eli's hands. It frees these pretty children you have seen and all my other slaves and gives to each a little gold to live on. To make it valid I must die swiftly and in such a way as to deface my body. Yet there must be a witness, free, well-known, to testify that I have not been murdered, or else the law will slay my slaves instead of free them. I must act soon or be cast out to starve, while my next kinsman, richer than I and cruel, takes my all. Addai, you are that needed witness. When Melas went for you he took a codicil to Hippos making you an executor. Wait. Do not answer. You think me mad, because of this mock-swimming and this straw. I am as sane as you; but the old Titan chained to his crag, with vultures at his vitals, suffered no more than I—I, who am the best lyric poet since Anacreon, I, who adore all beauty and all joy! What changes do you see in me? Move the torch closer."

"Your hair is prematurely gray. You are thinner. You have ceased to be a clever little pest of a poet and have become a man. Why?"

"Because of this," groaned Kleomenes. He rose and tore apart his tunic. He had become a leper.

"Jesus cures lepers," gasped Bar Ad, at last.

"'Tis so that kindly people talk to children and soothe the dying," said Kleomenes, covering himself. "You know, and I know, that there is no cure."

"My friend, He has cured hundreds."

"Thanks that you call me friend. Your Jesus may be good for women and for children, but, for a man of the world—ah, well, it is too late. My wine was poisoned. Already I grow heavy and must sleep. Lepers are legally dead. They can make no wills. For the poor girls' sake, Addai, is it too much to ask that, when I am gone, you lay a napkin over my face and, as you do so, let fall that torch into that straw and so conceal my leprosy? Call Melas."

Melas came.

"I can not see you, Melas," peered Kleomenes. "Be likewise blind to me. If my household suspect nothing, all will be free, to-morrow, and with money. If not, you all die slaves."

When all was over it was Melas who dropped the torch into the straw. The household wept.

Next day Bar Ad rejoined Saneman. At the end of their round, when they reached, at dusk, the village where Jesus healed, they went into the cottage where He was a guest, to report to Him. As they left Jesus detained Sanemen. When Bar Ad came out it was moonlight and he heard a low harsh voice out of the shadows.

"Addai," it grated, "Addai bar Ad! Oh, for the love of God, Addai."

"What is it?"

"You asked about me when you were in Hippos, so here I am."

"Who speaks?"

"Melitta."

Bar Ad's mind swept back to the lovely girl sitting on the citron-wood table swinging her feet, and laughing because she could not entertain him. Involuntarily his voice softened.

"Come forward, then, Melitta."

Out of the bushes at his knees a dark shape dragged

and lay along in the dust before him. He stooped to raise it.

"Unclean," it wailed. "Unclean."

"Oh, Melitta!"

"Karis sold me to Kleomenes, at my own wish. This came three years ago, and Kleomenes cast me out. I am a freewoman now, Addai; a free Greek woman of the Dekapolis—as you see."

There was a pause. Bar Ad had ruled his thoughts for years with a grip of iron; but now they suddenly flashed full of pictures of this horror as he had seen her when a laughing girl. Melitta spoke again:

"They say that He is very merciful and full of pity, Addai, and that you are His friend. When I knew you, you, too, were merciful. Do you think that He will cleanse a Gentile? I am unclean, body and soul, Addai; body and soul unclean."

"Jesus!" called Bar Ad. "Jesus bar David!"

The door opened and the tall form he loved stood in the lighted doorway.

"I used to know this woman. She has faith. Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make her clean."

Melitta crept to the doorway and touched the edge of His sandal with one finger. He knelt and laid His hand upon her head.

"I will," He said. "Be clean."

Bar Ad took Melitta and Saneman across the lake. He sent Melitta in to announce his coming to Karis; an older Melitta, but lovelier than before. An hour later he came back with Saneman, whom Karis, laughing and weeping at their story, equipped as a Grecianized Jew, and for whom she suggested the name of "Kleon."

"You look a little worried and disturbed, Karis," said Bar Ad, as they left.

"I am," whispered Karis. "Addai, when you were a boy, did you bring home stray puppies and sick kittens often?"

"Always," laughed Bar Ad. "Now that you live with me, dear Karis, you must get used to it."

As soon as Saneman, in his new dress and with his new name of Kleon was settled among the growing crowd of disciples whose presence testified to the return of Jesus' popularity, Bar Ad made haste to see old Malachi, for time pressed, and he greatly needed Marcus Marcellus Murio. Of all the Nazarites, now that he himself was forced to stay at home, Murio was best fitted to bear a message to the Magi. He found the School of Malachi very much as it had been for the last thousand years, for time means nothing in the wilderness. Young men grow old and die and, once in a lifetime, a rock topples and falls. That is all. The clash between his haste and their repose staggered Bar Ad. Moreover, Malachi wanted him to talk theology.

"What does this Jesus teach?" asked Malachi.

"Mostly, that man must make his own immortality. Unlike the beasts that perish, we live past death; but, just as death of the body claims the beasts, so there awaits mankind, beyond death, a second death, that of the soul, from which He came to save us by planting in us something of Himself or by awakening in us something divine already there, or both!"

"Some tell of His kingship, more of His kindness."

"Both are true."

"All relate miracles."

"Malachi, they are true; but they are limited to acts of help for others. He does none for Himself. He orders forgiveness but permits defense of others; nay, even self-defense. Judas has, therefore, a theory that, if placed where He must protect Himself or perish, He would use a miracle to save Himself. I doubt it. Now, as touching His kingship——"

And Bar Ad plunged into a description of his plans to protect Jesus. Malachi approved of those concerning Herod and Annas, but grimly disapproved the appeal

to Tiberius, because, if successful, it would coerce Jesus.

"It is too far set forward, now, to stop," declared Bar Ad. "The messengers are gone. Will that prevent your help in the affair of Annas?"

"I should be glad to checkmate that high priest."

"Then lend me Marcus Murio and write a letter to the Magi accrediting him and asking that they forbid remittances of temple-tax from the Jews of Babylonia and Persia if Annas interfere with Him who must be King of the world."

"Gladly; but, will they do it?"

"I think they will. Persia and Babylonia are not pleased that any of their subjects, even Jews, pay tax to any other power, even the temple. I will add my report and urge them to it," declared Bar Ad.

"Addai," regretted Murio, when told, "you give me a heavy mission and a long one. I could do better if Jesus had delivered John."

"Perhaps, in view of John's collapse of faith, He could not," suggested Bar Ad.

"We thought of that," admitted Murio, bending down from the fast riding-camel which Bar Ad had bought for him. "Therefore I do my best. Tut, tut,"—and he kicked the camel's nose as it reached bubbling round for a nip at his shins—"I will outstrip all caravans and ride alone. Your errand shall be done as soon as may be."

"The safety of the Son of God rides with you. Go in peace." Bar Ad dismissed him, and went back into the school to discuss Jesus of Nazareth with Malachi, who was hungry for every detail.

"Great wonders do not matter, Addai," he smiled; "because nothing can prove them. Details do, because details show character. You tell me Jesus works miracles and was born of a virgin. I look at you and see you tell the truth, so far as you know it. Yet

there is not a cult from Egypt to the Alps but has a god born of a virgin, who rises again and gives us his flesh to eat in the form of bread. Do I believe? There is not evidence enough in earth or heaven except in character to prove both or either. You saw the miracles? What of it? You would not believe your own eyes yourself, were there not something more. What I want is His character. Is He the kind of man that God would be if God became a man? The only reality upon earth is character. Men are advanced to positions because they can fill them, or other men think they can. Men are degraded because they fill their positions badly, or others think they do. Men are loved because they love others and will care for them—or others think so. These noble marble palaces, these pomps and armies, these rags and wretchedness of all mankind are not, in themselves, real. They are the signs of character and change like moonbeams, because character changes. If this man's character be such as you say, then He is Son of God, born of a virgin, working miracles, and I believe. If not, nothing can prove them, not even eyesight. Moreover, no man can invent a higher character than his own and long deceive others. If you tell me of a better man than you are, Addai, and the tale hangs together, then I know that you speak truth and that you saw him."

"You have few compliments for my veracity," chuckled Bar Ad. "However, it does not matter. Jesus is His own miracle."

"I do not doubt your truth-telling but your clear seeing—yet need do so no more. You are the best of the Nazarites, since John is gone; but, Addai, you have described a man so much better than yourself that the chief mountain-ranges of His character rise up beyond your soul-sight—else you would never plan to have an emperor send Him orders. That man is the Son of God—at least, He would be, if He had saved our John."

The months which Jesus spent in the Dekapolis were the most peaceful portion of His ministry. The Greeks who governed took no official notice of Him and the Sanhedrim committee had no jurisdiction and kept out. He still preached in local synagogues and so was opposed, but only by local Pharisees. He closed with a second miracle of loaves and fishes and went north, in Simon Peter's fishing-boat, for a quiet time with the Twelve, to sum up their experience.

The boat had brought so many from Capernaum that it had room only for the Twelve. John whispered where to rejoin, and Bar Ad stayed on the beach at Dalmanutha. He could have taken another boat and followed, but these boat-trips were Jesus' most tactful way of managing withdrawal from the crowd. He therefore walked with Kleon, who had nowhere to go; and they trudged along the beach to Capernaum.

Kleon was a most interesting comrade. Early or late, hot or cold, wet or dry were all the same to him. He had no prepossessions, except as to Jesus. He was reticent, though not silent, about himself. Though he remembered his life before and during his insanity, he told only that he had been a small farmer on the Hieromax and all he loved were dead. Concerning Jesus he was eloquent. He said that something alien had confused him while that which was himself shrank, frightened and suffering, into a corner. Then Jesus drew it forward. The means by which he drew it was certainty that God is really kind and really our Father. "Had I known that at first," he concluded, "nothing could have overcome me."

"Then if, by any means, one can rouse love of God and trust in God in any darkened mind——"

"How shall one rouse in any darkened mind that which the clearest minds apprehend only dimly. No. If any one can rouse love of Jesus and trust in Jesus, in any darkened mind—then comes the light of God."

"When evil took your body it took more. Do you remember whether sin pleased you?"

"It did. Terrible things, at which I shudder now, seemed pleasant. Yet I was always unhappy, because, deep down in me, that which was really I revolted."

"Then, if you and I can rouse trust in Jesus in any darkened soul, we, too, can cast out devils."

They reached Capernaum at sunrise, and went to Karis. She took Bar Ad to Jesus' mother to give news. When they returned it was the heat of the day. Everybody who could had retired to take naps. Kleon was asleep in the coolest place—the shadow of the fig-tree in the courtyard—and the only really wide-awake persons were Peter's wife, singing in the kitchen, and Melitta, who brought them bread and cheese, dried figs and wine, and cool water from the well, flavored with pomegranate juice. She served it in Karis' bedroom—the great cool upper chamber, a pleasant place.

"I pay two-thirds of the expense of the household," explained Karis, as Bar Ad looked around. "It is not much. Melitta and I do half the work."

Melitta took Bar Ad's staff and sheepskin, removed her own outer garments and Karis', brought water in a basin, took off Bar Ad's and Karis' sandals and washed their feet.

"We will not need you for a little while now, Melitta," said Karis gently. "You may take your nap as we planned."

Melitta, in a quietly matter-of-course way, removed the rest of her garments, all but one, pulled out a pallet and a pillow from the wall, and lay down at Bar Ad's feet. She pretended to sleep but the heaving of her breasts and the flutter of her closed eyelids betrayed her emotion. Bar Ad stared, questioning, at her and then at Karis.

"I thought that we had done with this, dear lady," he said at last.

"I thought so too," assented Karis sadly, "and was content and more, for the time being—and then you changed your mind and brought yourself home a slave-girl. Oh"—as Bar Ad made a gesture of dissent—"I do not question your right, nor your kindness to me, my Lord. Nothing can ever cancel that. If anything more were possible, you have done it. You have fought for me and saved me from a Roman patrol, and no woman can forget that a man fought for her. By all the laws of Rome and Greece and even Galilee, and by the deeper law of plain human kindness, we are both yours. Enjoy us as you choose and no one, not even Simon's wife or Simon's wife's mother, will turn head to notice. If either came in now she would go out again and see no need of comment, not even to the other."

She rose, glided to the door, barred it and turned, letting slip some of her own garments to the floor. Then she went on with a suppressed passion that made her eyes pools of purple, her own breasts heave and her knees tremble, while the controlled overtones of her golden voice rang softly through the room.

"Compare us, Addai. Am I not the more beautiful? I can dance for you, sing for you, better than she, and I love you with all my heart—yet you bring home a slave-girl. I love Melitta for old times' sake and for herself as well. Bitter suffering, bravely borne, has transmuted all the metal in her soul into pure gold. Also, she is beautiful enough to be worthy of me."—Bar Ad thought of that ghastly thing dimly seen crawling by moonlight and Karis read his face.—"Look at her. She is more beautiful than even at sixteen. She is yours, in glad and willing submission for your great kindness—but you brought her home. You have the right. I do not question that. By law we are both yours. Our duty and our desire lie to you. But, Addai, you showed me a great vision of

pure love, love almost as clean and pure as Jesus waked in my broken heart for God our Father. To win a step or two upward to that love you set my soul on continence and purity. I thought you clean as your own deser and as austere, and prayed I might be worthy of you some day—and you bring home a slave-girl! Have I fallen short in any way to please you, my Lord? Am I not beautiful also? Enjoy us both as you please—it is the law—I do not question it—but do not turn to her and leave me comfortless." And Karis stretched out her hands to him.

"Karis, you are my wife. Come here to your own place in my arms. Are you not just humanly jealous of Melitta?"

"A little, Addai; but, by the law, you have the right to keep her, or a dozen like her. Though it is not the custom of Galilee it is of the Dekapolis and of all the world; only—I had hoped all that was over!"

"Now was ever a poor Nazarite in such a situation. How shall I make you understand."

"Have we misunderstood? If so, thank God!—but, at least, tell us; that we may not wonder whether we have failed in woman's duty to you."

"You have not failed, poor things, you have not failed. Now, first, as to Melitta. Rise, Melitta, and stand before us. You see, Karis, she has touched Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus' heart is pure. He does not frown on marriage—He blessed the one at Cana of Galilee—but He does not tolerate slave-girls or flute-girls or all the thousand other impure customs of this world. One man to one woman and for life; that is His teaching. One woman and no more, to one man and no more, until death part us. Therefore, Melitta, you shall walk safe from me for all your life. Marry whom you will. I shall not touch you, no, nor any other woman in this world again, so long as Karis lives, but Karis here."

"Oh, Addai."

"God's own clean order, Karis, and Jesus' command! Moreover, Melitta, you are no slave-girl of mine or of any other man. When, bitterly and from a breaking heart, you called yourself a free Greek woman of Dekapolis, you told the truth. When Kleomenes cast you out, he freed you; or, if not that, then Jesus freed you when you touched Him and He cleansed you. You shall be Karis' handmaid, but Karis shall give you wages; for you are free—a free Greek woman of Dekapolis."

Melitta knelt at Bar Ad's feet and kissed them.

"Rise, child. I do not give you freedom; Jesus did. Cover yourself; for what a slave may do without fault, since she must obey, is wrong for freewomen. Now for you, Karis—— No, Melitta, stay! Sit at my feet; and, Karis, come you here and kneel against my knee, my arm around you, where I can see your eyes. Dear heart, how shall I make you understand, once and for all! I love you. But, wife, I follow a great quest, which women would destroy. I lived a foul life, once, with you and then with warned and chosen slave-girls in the cave. I waited for Astarte and her four after the dance at Capri. At Rome I bought flute-girls until I grew disgusted. The wage of sin is death. Before death came God, in His mercy, smote me and I repented. I confessed my sins to Him, took pardon and lived clean. I fasted and I prayed. There is no way to keep men's thoughts from women except by mighty works and thoughts of God. I wrought mightily and ruled like iron even the secret imaginations of my heart. But he who prays and works and thinks of God, gains power. Now, I can almost do things. I can read men's minds, as Jesus does, only imperfectly and slowly, because of my past sins. Almost I can heal the sick. A little more and I can cast out devils. Power is in me—power that I would use to help others. If I should turn my thoughts to women now,

that power is lost. As long as women are to me dear friends, or images on a polished mirror that pass but do not stay, though they shine brightly they do no harm; but if I look on one not as a friend but—oh, Karis, don't you see that, for the few months more until the world has reached its crisis, that I, if I am to act with power in that crisis, must turn from you?"

XXVIII

His vivid domestic climax with Karis and Melitta left Bar Ad spiritually strengthened. Most wise men never know their powers of resistance, since they avoid temptation. He, through no fault of his own, knew his. He was not likely ever to walk through such a fiery furnace of the flesh again. Karis and Melitta now loved him as women look at saints. His danger was no longer the lust of the flesh but, like John Baptist's, the pride of life.

Melitta danced down to tell Peter's wife and Kleon that she was a free woman. Peter's wife's mother had once been a garrulous old woman with a vinegar disposition; but since Jesus cured her of a burning fever, she had grown kindly. She made Melitta a little celebration over it, with supper in the courtyard, at which Kleon, to Bar Ad's amazement, made a quiet, courteous and kindly little speech. He had made public speeches for months, all over Dekapolis, but only about Jesus. It had not occurred to Bar Ad until now that these had altered something inside Kleon until he had become a man of intellect, of kindliness and courtesy—in short, a gentleman.

While puzzling over this, Bar Ad perceived another of his own stupidities. Not only had he failed to understand Kleon, but Byssus, and thereby even Jesus. There had been something painfully unreconciled in his mind between the grim and healthy austerities of John Baptist and Jesus' joyful and un-self-tormenting goodness. He suddenly caught the force of a remark of Byssus' which he had quoted since himself, with which, in fact, he himself had supplied Byssus without feeling its wisdom. Byssus had said that prayer and fasting were not

the way to pardon but to power. They had put a nation into John Baptist's hand but had not given him sense enough to join Jesus. Illuminated by this remembrance Bar Ad's ideas cleared. Something snapped into place in his mind. He saw how things were done. The tangle of the two religions, John Baptist's one of prayer and self-denial and fasting and Jesus' joyous faith in God's forgiveness, uncoiled. Fasting and self-denial can not get pardon. Nothing but penitent request to God, will do that, as children ask forgiveness of their father. But, when forgiveness is received, then spiritual power to help others comes from prayer and fasting.

When this unfolded, Bar Ad felt like one who has been blind and now can see. John Baptist was not wrong in his austerity. Prayer, fasting, self-discipline, are necessary to become a channel by which the help of God can pour on others. Jesus fasted and prayed and when He grew angry (as in the case of the man with the withered hand) controlled and disciplined Himself, as Bar Ad had seen. Yet joyous old disreputable King David, most of whose poems Bar Ad knew by heart, was not wrong either. Plain, manly, straightforward repentance, forsaking sin and asking God for pardon, brings no strong power of miracle, no great ability to work for others, but it does bring the pardon. Then and there Bar Ad gave up eating and sleeping for the time being, told Kleon to wait for him, bade farewell to Karis and hurried north, past Cæsarea Philippi, to where there were still demonized men. Jesus had cured all those around Capernaum. Bar Ad must have material to work on and space and leisure, by himself, to try out these conclusions.

Some ten days later, as Judas lay on the forepeak of the fishing-boat, watching a wealthy sunset etch Bethsaida against an opulence of heavenly gold, he remarked to Simon Peter:

"You know that Bar Ad, the Galilean who used to

be chief lieutenant for John Baptist? When you and Jesus left us yesterday to hurry home by the short-cut over the mountain behind Chorazin, while we came round by the road, we ran across him just outside Bethsaida Julias. He looked almost like John Baptist himself back again. He had hunted up and healed the worst demonized man who had escaped us, and then another and another, until men gathered and hauled to him all they could find. When they dragged each before him he looked at him until the man said something. They can't stand silent watching. Then he said: 'Hush and come out!' sharp as a whip-lash. One came. The man fell screaming. Another refused. It jeered that Bar Ad had not strength enough. 'Who ever said I had?' he answered, quick and stinging as you or I. 'Who ever thought I had? Not I. But Jesus has. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, hush and come out of him!' Simon, his face has sharpened and his eyes blazed and sunk until he looks worse than the demonized he cures. He staggers as he stands."

"I have seen you when you were no beauty, Judas Iscariot, after a couple of long days of fasting, prayer and healing."

"We drew out of the crowd and talked it over. Then we went back and Thomas forbade him. It is not right that one not of the Twelve should heal in Jesus' name."

"Who voiced that idea first in your kind council? You, Iscariot?"

"Why, now I come to think, it was I."

"What did Bar Ad do?"

"He broke out roundly saying that now we knew how it felt to be the committee of opposition. He asked who was greatest among us anyhow, and who should give the law from the highest throne of glory when Jesus judged Israel. That started the rest arguing; but, when they had drawn off, he turned humble and

said that perhaps Thomas might be right, because we are nearer Jesus than he is. That quieted his crowd and he dismissed them.

"Judas, be ashamed. The man is great. What did you do?"

"Thomas took him to Karis."

"While the rest of you came home arguing about position and power and greatness until Jesus had to interfere. I'm glad I wasn't there. I might have flashed into some grand mistake, worse than you all. As it is, Bar Ad came out of the encounter better than any."

That night Thomas looked for Bar Ad at Simon Peter's house. Simon was out and from the upper chamber Thomas heard music; so he came softly up the stairs. At the top he found Melitta, finger on lip. "What did she do for Bar Ad?" whispered Thomas. "Fed him and put him to bed," murmured Melitta: "Now she is trying to keep him there. Listen!"

Karis played softly on a harp and sang:

"Once I believed God was a mighty king
To whom we bring
Grave reverence and due obedience.
Later, I saw Him blend into my friend,
Incarnate for me in His innocence;
But, now I have grown old, being more bold,
When in my lap climbs up my little son
And lays his head to rest upon my breast,
I dare conceive of God Himself as One,
Smiling a little, who receives with joy
A naughty, dirty, tired, little boy."

The soft song ceased. Thomas found Bar Ad on a pallet with Karis on a cushion at his side.

"Jesus settled the quarrel, Bar Ad," announced Thomas, "by lining us all up before Him. Then He took Peter's tiny boy in His arms and said, 'Whosoever

shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.' In speaking of offenses He said that, when we quarrel, we are to talk it over between ourselves. If that do not succeed then talk it over before witnesses. If that fail then tell it to the brethren and let them mediate. Only in the last resort may one grow callous and let the other go; for, if any fail, he is no worse off than before and if any succeed, behold he has gained his brother. Addai bar Ad, do you not see where this leads? Karis sees!"

"I can not say I do, Thomas Twin. Alas, I have a brother."

"When I told Jesus I forbade your healing in His name because you are not one of the Twelve, He said that I was wrong. Forgive me, Addai."

"Joyfully, Thomas."

A few days later Jesus went up to Jerusalem and appointed seventy disciples to go before Him, teaching and healing. Of these Bar Ad was one.

The Seventy rejoined Jesus at Jerusalem, toward the end of the feast, drunken with exultation. They told Him all about it and they told every one else who would listen. The lepers cleansed had to come up to the temple for purification and many of the other healed came up to make thank-offering, and they talked too. The Seventy had been authorized to promise definitely that Jesus would visit Perean towns in a settled order, to finish what they had begun. The Pharisees were furious.

Bar Ad, assigned with Kleon to southern Perea, had healed his hundreds. He made report with the others, then searched out Shalluq. At Shalluq's house he found Karis and both so full of news they almost wept to see him. Somebody, using Bar Ad's name, was secretly enlisting John Baptist's disciples to attack Herod. Shalluq's messenger had come just after Bar Ad disappeared, and had brought back Karis with him.

If such a rumor came to Shalluq's ears it must have reached Herod's also. Shalluq was insistent that Bar Ad disappear, by again becoming the Magus Balthazar.

"There are three of me," laughed Bar Ad, his arm round Karis. "I am Addai the disciple of Jesus and I am Balthazar the Magus and I am also Bar Ad the Nazarite. Herod has cause for quarrel against two of us. He wants Bar Ad the Nazarite for enlisting insurgents and Balthazar for stealing Karis; but what has he against Addai the disciple of Jesus?"

"If Herod's spies are half as good as they used to be," put in Karis, "he knows all three are one."

"And that one both a Nazarite and a Magus. He will think long before he stir up two such wasps'-nests."

"He killed John," warned Shalluq.

"That was woman's work."

"And so will this be," urged Karis. "Herodias knows that her chief enemy, now that John is dead, can be found and arrested among Jesus' followers. I think you would be safest in the desert."

"The messenger I often send you is your man," Shalluq explained, "a camel-driver of your pack-train, the son of your chief stable-man in the old days at Armageddon. He is a disciple of John Baptist and adores you. I sent him to search out these people and enlist. He did so. They told him Herod is to be attacked on the way to the city at next Passover. He is to gather with the others at Elijah's pool a week before Passover and there obey your orders or Bar Abbas', acting for you."

"Bar Abbas," mused Addai, "Bar Abbas? I see. I see! Hush. Let me think!"

After a silence he began again, "Bar Abbas' men must have picked up Jochanan bar Kaphar. The commission was, of course, in his purse. Bar Abbas opened it. He is quite keen enough to see its value. He could have sold it to Herod; but it enables him to raise two

or three thousand fighting men. His band is only a hundred. It would be worth more to him to keep it. He and I have discussed what could be done with three thousand men to hold off troops while the band looted a palace. An hour would be enough. Such a stroke could be made only at Jerusalem during Passover. At any other time and place three thousand men could not escape. At Passover, if armed with swords and staves, they need but mingle with the multitude and be as lost as water in the sea."

"I see," nodded Karis.

"Therefore he will not move till Passover, nor will he attack Herod on the way. That is a blind. His two thousand will not care for loot, but only to kill Herod and carry off Herodias and Salome. Salome deserves all they'll do to her. She'll dance a grimmer dance than even that for John the Baptist. I hardly think that I need interfere. Let them kill Herod and welcome."

"If such a thing should happen with your name behind it, however falsely used, the whole wide Roman Empire would be too narrow for you, Addai," warned Shalluq.

"Jesus said, 'Help your enemies,'" reminded Karis.

"Well, either reason should be good enough and you are both against me," shrugged Bar Ad. "The thing ought to be easy to stop at Passover, because John Baptist's men will take my orders. Nothing will be done till then. I need, Shalluq, swift and sure information of where they reassemble after they scatter from Elijah's pool. Enlist another man or two among them. At least, I am now sure that the commission will not be sent to Herod."

"He probably knows its contents now, Addai."

"True, Karis. Therefore I am fairly safe for the present. He will not strike me now, for fear the thing

might be postponed, not stopped. His spies must know Bar Abbas would act without me. The thing they can not know is that Bar Abbas lies when he says I am behind it; and Chuza is an intelligent man and may have guessed even that. He can not find me during a feast. I am safe in the crowd. He ought to lock me up before Passover, though, and he knows where to look for me, and that is with Jesus. Evidently I had better disappear into the desert, Karis, as you suggest."

"With me?"

"No, dear. In prayer and fasting and with God."

"Then take me, first, to King Aretas' court. I have a half-formed plan that should disarm Herodias and keep her from attacking Jesus."

Karis and Shalluq's Martha took to each other and so, during the preparation for their journey, Bar Ad stayed in the city. Karis was only half a Jewess and so had no business in the court of the women; but Bar Ad's ideas were no longer narrow, and so he took her. The ground-plan of the court was a vast square; but it had four very large, roofed, square rooms in the four corners, outlined by pillars, so that its unroofed open space was shaped like a great Greek cross. Karis saw this and shuddered. "See," she pointed, "not only in the world but even in God's own temple, the place men set apart for women is a cross."

"Jesus will change all that," smiled Addai. "Some day it shall be a throne."

Bar Ad would not again risk Karis on the road as a peasant. When Tabernacles was over and it became unsafe for him to stay in Jerusalem he assembled a tiny caravan and took her to Petra as a great lady. There were two Aretai, Aretas of Arabia, whose daughter Herod married, and his cousin of Syria. The name "Aretas" is a generic name, like "Pharaoh." Every king of Arabia Petra was named "Aretas." "Isha" is generic also. The Princess Isha of Arabia, Herod's law-

ful wife, had fled to her father at Petra. She knew Karis from the old days at Herod's court and liked her.

Petra was a remarkable city. The valley in which it nestled was beautiful with a stream running through the middle. It had perpendicular sides and was accessible only by a long narrow winding chasm where the stream ran out. It contained some houses, many gardens, an arena and a swimming-pool, but the bulk of the palaces and public buildings were carved as caves into the solid rock. In this valley a dynasty of Alexander's ubiquitous Greek adventurers established themselves. Petra was not impregnable—but at this time it was supposed to be. Its princes were Greek, its people Arab.

The border between Aretas and Herod, along Perea, was a battle-ground, and Bar Ad had to go south through Judea and then east around the end of the Dead Sea to get into Petra. He traveled slowly, being in no haste to part from Karis. On the last night, as they waited outside the defile of Petra for permission to enter, she said to him:

"Addai, what can you do best?"

"Fight with the shepherd-staff," answered Addai, after reflection.

"I have seen you fight with it twice. Once you conquered seven swordsmen, a second time five. Both times you ran away and seemed defeated, then returned. Is that part of the play?"

"In effect, yes. One man with shield and short-sword is helpless against a shepherd-staff. Two swordsmen could kill him easily if they attacked front and rear. To win at shepherd-staff against many you must therefore he able to outrun them and, swooping back, meet them one at a time. The more armor they have the slower they move. It is therefore safer to fight men in armor than men without."

"Are you invincible with it?"

"Heavens, child, no. Two men with staves could

probably beat me. Three men could, with their bare hands, if one would take a broken arm to enable the other two to close."

"Then, to win, you must fight men armed with sword and shield and able to move only slowly?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Oh, only an idea of mine. Addai, would you risk death for Jesus?"

"Certainly. Would not you?"

"Look, Addai. See how the purple skies are dusted with bright stars. If a woman risked her greatest treasure for Jesus and lost, would she regain him there?"

"There, dear, or elsewhere. Why?"

"Next after shepherd-staff, Addai, what do you do best?"

"Ride, I think. I was brought up, riding."

"Addai, am I your friend?"

"My very dear friend, Karis, grown dearer every day."

"If shepherd-staff is such a magic weapon, why do not soldiers use it in war?"

"It is only powerful against short-sword and shield. It does not kill. Any one who knows how can meet it. It is only valuable against those unfamiliar with it. If one man grasp the staff and hold on, anybody else can kill the staff-bearer."

"Addai, I'm sleepy. We part to-morrow for a long time. Not as your wife but as your dear friend, may I sleep to-night inside your great cloak, your arm around me and my head upon your shoulder, as if I were a boy?"

"Come, dear."

Next morning Bar Ad made sure of Karis' favorable reception by Isha and then shepherded his little caravan back to Judea. There he left them and went into the sandy desert toward Egypt, first experimenting in the villages on the edge of the waste until sure his power

of healing was not impaired by disuse. His habit of seeing men against the background of the yellow desert, edged with a rainbow which varied according to their characters, returned to him there, dependent now, he found, on close attention and an act of will. He found his power of concentration sharply increased. He went further in fast and vigil in the same time. On the fifth day instead of the seventh the spotted panther showed herself to him, but faded, now, and almost tawny, like a lioness. On the sixth day the demon of dry places came at his call; smoke-like, now, though malevolent as ever. They made no move to tempt him. By altering the focus of his mind he made them both appear and disappear at will. He shut them out and went on into the land beyond; far beyond. There he found his barrier at last, but also found the promise of its removal in good time.

When Bar Ad came out of his fast be found, by the notched stick at his side, that much time had passed. So, before plunging among men again, he went to old Malachi's cave for news. To his amazement the Nazarites received him, for John's sake, as greatest among them; greater than Malachi. They told him of the end of the Perean toil and of the raising of Lazarus. They said that it was common knowledge that Jesus predicted His own betrayal and crucifixion and promised that He would rise again. He had dismissed the Twelve and the Seventy and retired to a little village called Ephron, near the wilderness of Ephron. There He now rested, doing nothing. Jochan, the young Nazarite detailed to bring report from the watchers, said they were puzzled. Jesus was watching and praying in the wilderness, of course; but, in the intervals, He was telling stories to the village children.

"Jesus," said Jochan, "before he left Perea, told a story of a man who fell among thieves and was left for dead on the road to Jericho. A Levite and a priest

passed by and would not help, and he was saved by a Samaritan. Through all the crowd heads nodded at that story."

Malachi's whole school and even the Outer Nazarites, the Essenes of the nearest village, gathered to hear Bar Ad tell once more of John's last weeks. He did not mention John's repentance. It did not seem to fit. They thrilled to his oration like a tuned harp played by a master hand; but, when he told of Jesus, they grew discordant and murmured: "He should have saved our John."

"The Incarnate Angel of the Lord does all things well."

"Is He an angel or a madman?"

"He raised Lazarus."

"Was Lazarus really dead, Addai?"

"He has raised others."

"There are such things as trances. Malachi, here, falls sometimes into a trance that none may know from death. Give us some proof that they were really dead."

Then Bar Ad grew angry. They flinched—he had so much increased in dignity and power that they flinched—but still they faced him. Then he relaxed and laughed.

"The only proof would be a mortal wound or else corruption; which, you say, Lazarus did not see in spite of Martha's dread. The net can hang by one loop only—the character of Jesus. I know He is divine; but I know it because I know Jesus."

"Is there no sign fit for poor men like us, not very wise nor great nor able to walk with Him in the flesh, but wishing very much to know the truth? To know His character takes time and careful study of all His works. It is too long and slow."

"Speak, Malachi," said Bar Ad.

Malachi had aged much since the death of John and mellowed more. He had once looked like Elijah, God's

servant. Now he looked more like Abraham, God's friend.

"It has not been given me to see Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh," declared Malachi, "save as a lad; though I have seen Him in dreams. But I know the holy prophets and the mysteries. John said that Jesus is the Son of God. If John be right, Jesus of Nazareth will be killed, lie three days in the tomb and rise again, ascending into Heaven. His followers shall conquer death and remake the world. Addai bar Ad, of all here you best know Jesus. Is He such a man as the Lord God should be if He took flesh?"

"Malachi, if the Lord God of Hosts were here in the flesh He would behave like Jesus—supposing, always, He veil the brightness of His glory lest we be consumed. Jesus said He must be betrayed to the Romans, crucified, buried, and will rise on the third day. He said little of ascension, but He made His resurrection a challenge to all."

Then Malachi rose and the whole school rose with him.

"Brethren," he announced, "here is our test. If Jesus of Nazareth be betrayed—and crucified—and dead—and buried—and rise on the third day—then He is God."

XXIX

Bar Ad found letters at Jerusalem from Murio, from Minucius and from Karis. Murio's news was sober purple. He found the Magi well-disposed to action. They were manipulating governments, but slowly. They found the kings too willing. Their difficulty was not to obtain promise of punishment for offense committed, but to prevent delighted infliction of the suggested penalty before the offense.

Minucius' news was scarlet edged with gold. The letter ran:

"Lucius Curius Minucius, a Roman Knight, to his son Lucius Curius Thaddeus, under care of Shalluq, merchant of Sepphoris: Affection, Health and Greeting—

"Know that I have renewed mine ancient acquaintance with Sejanus and that he is favorable. We dined together yesterday. All he requires before action is a little more certainty. This he will get from his own agents in Palestine when navigation opens. Balkis of Capri has already broached the subject to Tiberius. Your friend, the lady Julia, has made of me the fashion as you said she would. Byssus himself is in demand at dinners to tell of you and of the Good Physician of Sepphoris. Inform the lady Karis that her great chests contain the key to every female heart in Rome. May you have daughters."

Karis' letter was pure sunshine. Written in Greek, in her tiny clear hand, it ran:

"Karis of Hippos, now at Petra, to my dear Lord Addai bar Ad, under care of Shalluq, merchant of Jerusalem and Sepphoris: Greeting and love eternal—

"Know that all things ripen toward one end. When you receive this give your soul and mine in prayer to God. Be at Cæsarea on the day following the Sabbath, three weeks before Passover. Make inquiry. If you learn that Pilate is with Herod and Isha at Sepphoris, show yourself to the magistrate before whom Minucius adopted you, in such wise that he will arrest you. Have upon your person papers of adoption and letters from Minucius, if they be favorable. Demand, by your privilege as Roman knight, that you be taken before Pilate at Sepphoris, at once. There act according to the will of God shown through the Princess Isha; knowing that, if you win, Jesus of Nazareth will be made safe and, if you lose, you and I will go hand in hand together to make report before our Father's throne."

There was full time, before Bar Ad need go to Cæsarea, for him to see some rich men of Jerusalem. Shalluq had made the necessary inquiry and named Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea as the two richest men favorable to Jesus. Their united fortunes were greater than that of Annas. Nicodemus was Teacher in Israel, an office which combined the duties of vice-president and secretary of education and brought upon him much public business; so Bar Ad chose, rather, to go to Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph's town-house, like that of most millionaires of Jerusalem, was in the upper city, near the west end of the viaduct bridging the Tyropœon Valley.

A Nazarite had entry anywhere; so, when the porters told him Joseph was out, they added that he had gone to his garden and villa outside the walls; information which they were not allowed to give to any one else except a close personal friend or a priest of the temple. Joseph of Arimathea's garden was just north of the city. It was irrigated carefully, tended lovingly and very beautiful. Most rich men of Jerusalem had such suburban gardens, sometimes with a tiny villa, more

often with only a summer-house for retirement. They vied with one another in the beauty and privacy of these little "paradises" as they called them, and often spent the cool of the evening and the moonlight nights of summer there. Such gardens were surrounded on all four sides by high stone walls. Joseph's differed from most in that it was walled on three sides only, the fourth abutting on a low perpendicular cliff. It further differed in that the street outside twisted up a steep hill in such a way that the face of this cliff was visible over the wall from one part of the public highway. The faces of such cliffs were usually hidden by flowering shrubbery; but Joseph's garden was so beautiful and he so greatly loved it that he had recently determined to be buried there and Bar Ad found him inspecting a new tomb hewn in the rock. To make this tomb the concealing shrubbery had been cleared away.

Joseph was a starry-eyed little man who twisted the end of his beard. He had met Shalluq, knew Chuza intimately and had heard of Bar Ad himself; therefore they soon established mutual confidence. Bar Ad mentioned his connection with John Baptist and the sharp object lesson given by John's end and detailed his fears for Jesus' safety. He found that Joseph fully shared them. The probability of an order from Tiberius rendering Jesus invulnerable was discussed, and then Bar Ad broached the purpose of his visit and suggested that Joseph, with Nicodemus and any other wealthy men in sympathy with them, should bring temporary pressure to bear on Annas, until the restraining order came, by warning him of financial retaliation if Jesus were interfered with. When he had finished there was a long sad silence, during which Bar Ad silently prayed.

"We can not do it," confessed Joseph at last. "That bolt is shot already. Wily old Annas has outwitted us."

"How so?"

"He proposed contracts, very lucrative for us, tying

up my fortune and Nicodemus' for at least two years. We held off, dreading snares. Then he arrested Lazarus, Jesus' friend, and had him tried for his life before the Sanhedrim on charge of disturbing Israel. We took it for pig-headed prejudice. There is no sense in killing a man because, without his own knowledge or consent and even by no request of his own, he has been raised from the dead. Gamaliel said so. Yet, it seemed, Annas could control votes enough to condemn Lazarus. Then Nicodemus and I hinted that, if Lazarus went free, we would accept the contracts. Lazarus was released, we signed, and now Annas can enforce them in the courts and we are powerless to injure him."

"A very cunning old man," agreed Bar Ad.

"We wondered at the time," mused Joseph, twisting the end of his short brown beard. "It seemed so purposeless we thought it could be only that he yielded to the insane and narrow prejudice of Pharisees. I see it now—I see it now—too late!"

Before Bar Ad left for Cæsarea he received another letter from Minucius.

The mighty city Sepphoris, capital of Galilee, was larger than Jerusalem. During the civil war of Archilæus, when Jesus of Nazareth was three years old, it was partly burned by King Aretas of Arabia. Now Aretas' daughter Isha, with Herod and Pilate, were in conference there to end a new war between Arabia and Galilee. There was no way except for Herod to take back his lawful wife, Isha, and put away his brother's wife, Herodias. It was as well that Pilate brought with him half the legion usually garrisoned at Cæsarea.

As Bar Ad rode, a prisoner, through the streets, he sensed the greatness of the city more fully even than as a boy. Nazareth was less than an hour's walk from the center of Sepphoris. The long miles of bazaars of Sepphoris, astride two continental trade-routes, held samples of all the riches of the earth, and all the nations of the

world tramped through its streets. Sepphoris was a Roman city among Jews in Galilee, as Hippos was a Greek city among Jews in Dekapolis; but Sepphoris was vast. It held ten times as many people as Hippos, yet had no gates and no walls. It presupposed Roman peace. It owned an amphitheater where sometimes games were held and chariot races—for which cause the Jews hated and, later, destroyed it. Yet, even so, it had no bloody combats. Galileans would not tolerate the wholesale murders of the Roman arena.

Great as was Sepphoris it had no fit place where Pilate, with Herod and Isha, could meet. It was too new. There were no vast ancient palaces as at Jerusalem. Since Galilee was technically free, there was no Roman prætorium. Pilate was but a guest. Isha came with force enough to guard her, for Galilee was turbulent. Herod could not leave his only great city at the mercy of an Arab cavalry-brigade and so must concentrate troops there. Pilate brought enough heavy legionaries to dominate both. It did not suit Romans to camp meekly outside a city.

Chuza, a practical diplomatist, solved the problem. He turned the amphitheater over to Isha and the Romans and so this conference was held there, under the royal canopy, with Claudia and Isha on one side of Pilate and Herod and Herodias on the other. As an excuse, Chuza kept games going in the arena. Women danced. Arabs gave cavalry-drills and spear-plays, Roman soldiers drilled, built and demolished camps, Arabian archers and Galilean slingers shot at marks for prizes; there were chariot, horse and foot races. Isha's Arabs and Herod's Galilean body-guard, with the legionaries between, filled the curved end of the seat-banks. The Gentiles of Sepphoris and a fair minority of the Jews crowded the sides. Nobody in the royal pavilion paid much attention to the games. After the gladiatorial shows of Rome, such activities held little interest.

Negotiations were at a stand-still. Herod and Aretas were both subjects of the Empire. All knew that war between them must stop. Tiberius himself had said so, and Sejanus suggested this conference in consequence, although the Princess Isha had set the time. Everybody in it felt a sense of futility. Out of respect for great Tiberius they met, but knew it would be useless. In fact, judging from her lack of dress, her beauty and her conduct, Isha's main object was to show Herod what he had thrown away. Greek grafted on Semitic blood goes to make beauty, and Isha, with Karis' help, surpassed Herodias. Crafty old Aretas stayed at home and sent her in his place, and she preened herself before Herod like a peacock and showed herself his equal in diplomacy. Left to themselves the men might have patched up something. Herod's steward, Chuza, had brains and there was more than one wise old councilor in Isha's train. As it was, they could no nothing. The passions of the women intervened. Herodias, that angry tigress, and Isha, a panther of a woman, glared at each other and stopped every move for compromise. Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, was a patrician Roman of Imperial blood. When she grew haughty she surpassed them both. Passions were reaching breaking-points. Any explosion was quite possible. Yet they must finish out the conference or answer to Tiberius. Therefore when a decurion of cavalry brought in a Roman outlaw, Chuza was so delighted he took upon himself to make announcement to Pilate personally.

"Excellency," he bowed, "Lucius Curius Thaddeus, a Roman knight, accused of disloyalty to Sejanus and long lost sight of, was arrested yesterday in Cæsarea. He demanded to be sent to you."

"Bring him in," ordered Pilate.

Everybody brightened. A Roman knight was as important as an Arabian princess or a Galilean tetrarch. Pilate himself was only a Roman knight. Perhaps, by

finishing the knight, they might get through without an open rupture. He came before the half-circle of their thrones, a commanding figure, shackled by one wrist to the decurion but none the less imposing. There was a pause while all eyes brooded on him. Pilate broke silence.

"They called you Roman. Why are you dressed and bearded as a Nazarite?"

The answer was in Latin: "I am a Nazarite, born a Galilean. Yet I am really a Roman knight, adopted son of Lucius Curius Minucius, my own name Lucius Curius Thaddeus."

"He lies," slowly sneered Herodias, glad to vent her irritation on somebody. "I recognize him. He is a Persian Magus named Balthazar. He stole the mistress of my dancing-girls, one Karis, then married her."

"Karis of Hippos is a freewoman and in my train," grated the Princess Isha. "He did not steal her. Come forward, Karis!"

There was a little rush of sandaled feet and Karis lay panting against Bar Ad, his free arm around her.

"My dear Lord Addai," she sobbed, dry-eyed, "come we to this?"

"Addai?" exclaimed Chuza. "Addai bar Ad, who walks with Jesus. I thought I knew him."

"Addai?" chuckled Herod grimly: "Addai bar Ad, who enlists men against me? I also thought I knew him."

"Addai bar Ad?" repeated Herodias in slow still horror. "Best friend of John the Baptist?"

"No," answered Pilate, glancing up from a papyrus the decurion had handed him, "Lucius Curius Thaddeus, a Roman knight, adopted son of Lucius Minucius. Here is acknowledgment in due form, found on his person, certifying and renewing the adoption. Unshackle him, Decurion."

"Thanks, Pilate. Karis dear, the worst that comes

is death and that's no great disaster. Isha, I thank you for courtesy to my wife. Herod, I enlist no man against you. Bar Abbas does that falsely in my name. Herodias, when he strikes, look to yourself and to Salome. But, Herod, your recognitions are too narrow. Recall a silver night ten years ago at Capri, when a Galilean gladiator, skilled at shepherd-staff, killed your chief champion and lost you a great bet against Sejanus."

"I know you now. This criminal, Pilate, has been a bandit, a gladiator and a galley-slave."

"Nevertheless," ruled Pilate, tapping the paper, "if this be genuine—and my magistrate at Cæsarea certifies it—whatever he was once, this man is now Lucius Curius Thaddeus, a Roman citizen of equestrian rank and, though I may behead him to-morrow for his crimes, to-day he is fit to sit before a procurator a tetrarch and a king's daughter. Slaves, a chair."

"Bring two," ordered Bar Ad. "The lady Karis is my lawful wife, duly acknowledged; and though she has been mistress of the dancing-girls to Herodias and in the train of Isha, the wife of a Roman knight need stand before no woman but the Empress."

"Obey him, chamberlain," decided Claudia Procla proudly.

"Where have you been this long time, Thaddeus?" asked Pilate.

"In Babylon, in Egypt and in the desert. Sejanus has no quarrel with me now. At present, I follow Jesus of this city—that is, of Nazareth."

"How were you taken?"

"By asking to see you. I have letters from Minucius at Rome saying that, hearing of his tales of Jesus the great Physician, Tiberius sent for him and questioned him. He thinks your next dispatch from Sejanus will be an order to send to Rome the great Physician who can cure great Tiberius. I came to

tell you so at Cæsarea. Your magistrate saw me, and, as his duty was, arrested me."

"Pilate," grated Herodias, "was this man, Lucius Curius Thaddeus, condemned to death when Sejanus turned against him?"

"Of course—at least, by implication."

"Sejanus has no quarrel with him now, Herodias," interposed Herod, "also, the Magi will avenge him."

"Peace, Herod"—at this Isha laughed. "This man backed up John Baptist and now walks with that Jesus of Sepphoris whom you must destroy before He destroys us. Pilate, what will Sejanus say, and great Tiberius, when they learn that this chameleon outlived the day on which you caught him?"

"How nice! Do let him fight somebody," fluted Isha.

"Read the letters in the packet, Pilate," warned Bar Ad.

Chuza was a just man but he was an exasperated one. He had spent days, now, trying to make peace between two crowned hell-cats. Aretas should have scourged his pretty princess and married her off again to some petty kinglet in Arabia who would salve damaged goods with a dowry. Herod should have packed his termagant adulteress and her dancing daughter back to her husband. Pilate should have insisted on one act or the other and marched the legions, if necessary, to enforce it. Three men with less than one backbone between them will madden even the sanest executive. Usually, Chuza would have had some plan to set Bar Ad scot free for Jesus' sake. Now he could think of none—as Karis had foreseen.

"Excellency," he urged, "Highness, and you, most Adorables—it is quite true that Thaddeus can not be freed. The act, properly represented to Sejanus, would seem disloyal. He can not well be killed. It would disoblige the Princess Isha, here, the Magi

would object and the Nazarites, and in my humble way even I would regret it, for Thaddeus is friend to that Jesus of Sepphoris who cured my son Simon. To those who know the arena these games are dull. Thaddeus is a gladiator, lanista-trained. We will never agree by methods of diplomacy. Match Thaddeus against condemned men. Wager a diplomatic turn or two upon it. Let those who live go free."

"My Jews in Jerusalem would never endure gladiators in Palestine. They would rebel first."

"I meant not that but rather a race, oh, Pilate."

"Chariot, or horse?"

"Horseback, armed riders, each man free to slay—a desert combat."

"That is so good a thought," purred Isha. "I'll wager a husband on it. If Thaddeus win I take back Herod. If Thaddeus lose, Herodias may have him."

"Not so," sneered Herodias, "I have him now."

"What will you risk, then, oh, most reckless lady?"

"Jewels."

"Who cares for jewels here? I play for blood. Just now you threatened the Prophet of Nazareth. To please Karis here, against his life I set a three months' truce in this our war. If Thaddeus win you will do nothing to harm Jesus."

"Refused."

"Wait, lady," interrupted Herod. "Three months' truce is worth having. I can not safely kill another prophet. What say you, Pilate? Were it not well for all of us that, from this meeting should come at least a truce?"

"We have advantage on the border, Herod," cooed Isha, "but I am willing to forego it out of respect for great Tiberius. Besides, this man may win; in which case we press on and not Pilate, not Sejanus, not great Tiberius himself can blame us. What shall be the conditions?"

"Thaddeus conquered the best swordsmen in Rome, once, with a staff," protested Herod. "It is sheer slaughter to send untrained men against him. Give him ten Romans now,—or twenty."

"Give me chain-mail, a horse, a spear, a shield, and set me against four Romans, four Arabs and four Galileans, all condemned," begged Bar Ad grimly.

"We lack so many legionaries condemned," commented Pilate. "Romans keep discipline."

"Let Chuza settle terms, then," offered Bar Ad. "He is just."

"I want him killed, Chuza," ordered Herodias. "Withhold the armor."

"Look on the floor in front of you, Herodias," thrilled Karis, pointing. "See, as we do, the head of John the Baptist on a charger, his blood splashed on your feet!"

Herodias blanched, drew her foot back, then blazed:

"Shall this, my runaway servant-girl who was my friend, not pay for insolence in her flesh? Let those who live when it is over have her."

"Gladly," laughed Karis. "If my dear lord die—and I outlive him. Set something against that, oh generous lady!"

"I will," flamed Herodias. "Something as worthless as your life, yet precious to your husband Balthazar. Here is John Baptist's staff left in his prison-cell at Machærus and carved in Hebrew letters by his own hand. I use it for the handle of my great peacock fan. If he win, you shall have it."

"What did you say he carved on it?" asked Claudia Procula blandly.

"Portraits of all the principal divorced women in Palestine," flashed Isha.

"Pilate," broke in Bar Ad, "do you set nothing on the game against me?"

"Your liberty against your life."

"I could have kept them both by staying from Cæsarea and leaving you unwarned. You may need Jesus to satisfy Tiberius. My life against your promise not to harm Him."

"Am I a Jew? I do not wish Him ill. In any case, whether you live or die, you have my promise not to harm Jesus of Nazareth unless in case of riot or of tumult and not then if it can be avoided."

"That is worth dying for," bowed Bar Ad, thankfully. "Chuza, what must I do?"

"Escape," decided Chuza. "Seize my horse at the foot of the steps. It is a good one."

"Wait," ordered Pilate. "Sound trumpets. Clear the arena. Swing a century of horse across the open end of the amphitheater!" Orderlies dashed away with his commands.

At the snarling brazen blare of the trumpets everything stopped. A column of heavy Roman horse rode in at the open end, formed line and swept up one side of the arena and down the other, scouring it clear of the groups of Arabs and their camels who were giving a languid exhibition of desert sports there. Then the horsemen wheeled and halted, closing the lower end with a curved palisade of armed men and horses who blazed and glittered and shone in the westering sun.

Meanwhile Bar Ad kissed Karis long and fervently, saluted the thrones and, chatting with Chuza, sauntered down the steps to the little group of royal litters, guards and horses, gathered at their foot. There, still talking with Chuza, he quietly took his heavy Nazarite quarterstaff from the Roman horseman who held it and showed it to Chuza as if commenting on it. Then, using it for a leaping-pole, he sprang astride Chuza's horse, struck down the groom and dashed into the arena.

XXX

THE Circus at Sepphoris was a natural valley, four times as long as it was broad, opening toward the north, inclosed in three sides by steeply-sloping hills cut into seats, so that it was surrounded by a vast U-shaped tier of benches packed now with some forty thousand people. The royal stand was at the middle of the western side, roofed, its rails about twenty feet above the sand. It had a narrow staircase on each side, which could be closed against wild beasts with an iron gate. At the foot of the northern staircase were gathered Herod's horses, grooms and guards, at the foot of the other, Isha's. Romans kept peace at both. The arena itself was white sand, girdled by a stone wall twice a man's height, above which were seats. This sand was wetted enough for firmness and down its middle ran a low removable narrow platform of wood, the "bema," leaving a wide space at both ends to turn. When the open end was closed, as now, and the gates under the seats guarded, the whole arena was a trap, safe as a prison. Therefore nobody bestirred himself to stop Bar Ad.

He rode across nearly to the bema, halted, faced the royal stand and raised his staff for silence. It came—silence profound.

"Pilate," he shouted, his great voice ringing through the valley, "you shall not take me living."

"Your prisoner has escaped, Decurion. Capture or kill him with your squad," ordered Pilate mildly. "Be leisurely and sure. He can not get away."

"A thousand sestertia to the man who kills him," proclaimed Herod.

"A dancing-girl, his widow, to the squad," shrilled Herodias. "Expose her on the bema."

"Send other against me, Pilate, not the ten who guarded me from Cæsarea," called Bar Ad. "I like those men."

Pilate read or pretended to read Minucius' letters and seemed not to hear.

According to order the decurion was unhurried and cool. He went down the steps quietly and formed his men into line accurately and without haste. In the meantime Bar Ad began to sing, tossing his staff into the air and catching it to mark time. He sang in the old Hebrew, a snatch from one of the fighting psalms of David, and his resonant voice rose and towered like a fountain. The Hebrew half of the audience knew both words and music by heart and, after a measure or two, a thousand voices joined him. The song runs:

"For who is God except the Lord, and who
  Can such things do
But He who girdeth me with strength of might?
  My feet He maketh fleet as a hart's feet
And with His Fingers helps my hands to fight.
  No bow of steel they make but I can break;
God maketh room before me for to go;
  My footsteps shall not slide nor my foes hide;
I overtake them all and overthrow.
  Under my feet they fall and perish, for
  The Lord my God He girdeth me for war!"

Bar Ad broke off because the decurion, his men aligned to his satisfaction, rode forward at a trot to pin him against the bema. Dexterously, Bar Ad slipped out toward the closed end of the amphitheater. Somebody cheered. The decurion quickened from a trot to a gallop; Bar Ad turned and fled. His horse was fresh and superb, theirs were ordinary troop-horses worn out by thirty miles of travel from Cæsarea. He could have ridden circles round them.

"Pilate," he shouted, "these men are overmatched. They can not hope to catch me. This is murder!"

By this time the vast audience, sensing a contest under the escape, began to be a-tiptoe. The decurion, holding his men in line, wheeled and pounded along after Bar Ad. The leather girdle of a Nazarite is really a sling and in the scrip—a leather haversack—Nazarites carry stones. Stripping his girdle as he rode, Bar Ad put stone in sling, then rode easily, and looked back. At the north end of the bema the decury wheeled as it followed him, so he doubled the pace. At the south end they were galloping too fast to wheel, so rounded it in straggling single file. Then Bar Ad put his noble horse to speed. Saluting as he passed the stand, he rounded the northern end again, galloped a hundred feet down the sand and halted, close to the bema. Not twenty feet away, but quite unable to reach or hurt him, the four last Romans spurred and flogged their tired horses past. In vivid succession Bar Ad sent them crashing, striking their horses with sling-stones. One man lay still, the others rose and staggered. Then, the remaining six drawing too close upon him, he turned and fled again.

Country-bred Galileans were experts with the sling as well as with the staff and dearly loved skill with both. The shots Bar Ad had made were far from difficult, but the skill used in getting into position charmed the crowd. The whole Jewish portion of the audience sprang to its feet and, as Bar Ad sped on, a wave of cheering followed him around the arena. Herodias whispered orders to a chamberlain. So did Isha. Bar Ad, with the six remaining Romans toiling after him, made a half-round of the sand. As he passed by, two of the dismounted Romans staggered at his bridle. Bar Ad rose in his stirrups, struck right and left with the very end of the long staff and left them lying. The audience, recognizing and loving skill at shepherd-staff, redoubled applause. Bar Ad made a third easy round of the arena, riding leisurely, the heavy Roman horses pounding frantically behind him. During this round

and the next, three fives of Herod's Greek mercenaries, armed as Romans, rode in through the south gate under the seats, took Karis from chamberlains at the foot of the pavilion stairs and carried her across to the middle of the bema, opposite the thrones. Two of them climbed on the bema—it was about shoulder-high—and held her there, while the others made a mounted guard below her. Also, legionaries ran out, picked up the three prostrate Romans and cheered to find them living. As Bar Ad passed again the one dismounted Roman able to move ran into the way, though he could hardly stagger, and snatched at the bridle. Gently, almost tenderly, Bar Ad gave him the staff-butt and left him. Even the Romans shouted applause at so much stark courage met with so much mercy, and the legionaries, as they picked him up, hoisted the insensible man shoulder-high and cheered him.

By this time news had spread. The Romans now knew that Bar Ad was a Roman knight, disguised as a Nazarite but lanista-trained, the Arabs knew that Isha favored him and the Galileans had found out that he was a Galilean. One could trace the spread of the news by the cheering which followed him as he made a fourth easy round of the arena. The six Roman horsemen following him were now in a far-separated straggling column, their horses so worn out that Bar Ad obviously waited for them. Bar Ad made a fifth round, the multitude laughing. During this round, however, the decurion and two others threw their spears at him across the bema. He warded the last two spears easily with his whirling staff, but the first missed him only by inches.

"Fools," said Pilate. "Why do not two Romans turn and meet him?"

He had no more than spoken when they did. The three rearmost Romans turned and galloped the other way.

Then Bar Ad swooped. The three who followed him

were far apart and two of them had parted with their spears. He smote them one by one. Bar Ad overtook the fourth Roman almost as if he were standing still, struck him down from behind and passed him with hardly a check or hesitation. Seeing this the other two wheeled and tried to get together. There was no time. Bar Ad's rush was not racing—it was the swift swoop of an eagle. However, they did not disgrace the Roman name. They went down, spurring toward him.

"Move up your century of cavalry, Pilate, and slay," snarled Herodias.

"Not so," said Pilate mildly, glancing at Minucius' letter in his hand. "The man has earned freedom."

"Loose my men on him, then."

"Look," called Herod.

Bar Ad, pausing between the pavilion and the bema, fitted a stone into his sling. When the mob understood that he was attacking to rescue Karis, even Herod's troops cheered. He slung, and one of Karis's two guards flung up his arms and crashed off the bema, struck in the face. The other guard instantly swung Karis in front of him for a shield. Bar Ad slung again. One of the thirteen horsemen looking up at the bema slumped forward to his saddle-bow and slid to the ground. Bar Ad was killing, now, not sparing as he had the Romans. He galloped away. The twelve crouched behind their shields and would not stir. He turned, slung, and the stone whizzed up from a helmet and did no harm. Then the crowd shouted:

"They fear to follow you. Ride to the barriers, Nazarite. Stand up in the saddle and leap. Escape through the crowd. Death to the man who tries to stop you!"

Bar Ad turned and rode to the wall around the arena at a place where the Jews were seated thickest. There he stood up in his stirrups and shouted:

"Ho, Galileans, help me. Give me a pouch of

stones, for the Lord God He has delivered these heathen into my hand. Is there a Nazarite here? Or any of John Baptist's men? Or any shepherd of the hills? A pouch of stones, for the love of the hills, of the high hills, the purple whale-backed hills of Galilee, the long and golden glory of the hills—yea, for the honor of Him who guardeth Galilee and thunders from the summits of the hills."

There was a moment's pause; then, one by one and then by twos and threes together, pouches came whizzing down. Bar Ad caught half a dozen, crammed his own pouch, hung three on his saddle-bow, dodged the rest, waved thanks, galloped back to Karis' guard and halted just out of spear-throw.

"Herodias," he shouted. "Call off your men and give me Karis. I have won her. What can their swords and spears do against sling-stones. Throw yourself down behind the bema, Karis."

She laughed and did so, taking her not-unwilling guard half by surprise and dragging him with her. Bar Ad emphasized his advice by a dozen whizzing sling-stones in quick succession. Two hit men in the face and killed them. The rest changed the close-packed squad of horses into a kicking rearing squealing pandemonium. Flesh and blood could not stand it. As fast as they could disentangle themselves from the confusion the mounted men spurred at him.

Bar Ad swooped down upon the first and left him on the ground, but the rest were too close. Six rode after him. The rest, with injured horses, guarded Karis and gathered up spears. Chuza's magnificent charger had lost his first freshness, while those of Herod's men were not only fresh but maddened by excitement, ramping to run. Bar Ad could not play with these men as he had with the Romans. He had as much as he could do to keep ahead of them. Besides, he had to circle wide, nearly to the seats on one side and to the pavilion

on the other, to keep out of spear-throw of the men guarding Karis. His opponents could cut across. The guards cast at him over the bema as he passed on the far side, as well as straight when he came by in front. Moreover the six horsemen would not separate, but followed him in a group.

On the first round he escaped three spears at the back of the bema, as if by miracle. Two of them fell flat but one stuck end-up in the sand.

On the second round the guard was trying to lift Karis on to the bema. Bar Ad shouted, "Back to the bema, Karis!" and killed the guard with a sling-stone as he swept by. Karis climbed back on the bema and, in view of his orders and of the danger of either holding or failing to hold her, the three remaining men left her there unguarded; but Chuza's splendid horse received a spear-wound in the flank.

On the fourth round Bar Ad's horse labored heavily and he was nearly overtaken. Yet he caught one of Karis' guards scrambling over the bema to gather the spears lying on the sand and crippled him with a sling-stone, so that he lived but hung across the bema and lay still.

On the fifth round Bar Ad's horse failed and he had to bear so far away from the spears at the bema that the six pursuers headed him and turned him back to the pavilion, bringing the fight immediately under the throne-platform between the two stairways. There one of Herodias' grooms thrust a rod of office between his charger's legs and rolled it headlong. Bar Ad lighted on his feet. Herodias, leaning over the railing, threw the groom a piece of gold.

"A foul blow," screamed the mob. "A foul blow."

"Crucify any man who interferes again," called Pilate.

The dignitaries had left their thrones and leaned over the balustrade to see better. Bar Ad, on foot, with

his back against the wall, kept the horses away by sweeping at their legs with his staff and smashed the lighter spears of the Galilean horseman as they thrust at him. His breath came in gasps. Six men were too many. Somebody would throw knives, soon. It could not last.

"Match shepherd-staff with spear-staff," screamed Herodias. "Make an end."

"Our spears are too light, lady," called up a horseman. "They break."

"Take this, then," and, stripping from it the great peacock-plumed fan, she threw him down John Baptist's heavy staff.

He caught, but never used it. Smitten between the eyes by Bar Ad's staff, he reeled and fell. Before he reached the ground Bar Ad had dropped his own staff and seized John's.

"John Baptist's staff!" he shouted. "At last, John Baptist's staff."

The five horsemen were superstitious. They slackened their attack. Then the crowd, which seemed already roaring like a hurricane, suddenly roared louder. Princess Isha's horse, the best in Arabia, had dragged a struggling and apparently unwilling groom out on the sand. With John Baptist's staff Bar Ad laid flat two of the men still mounted and, through the gap thus made, ran at the shrinking groom. In a moment he was in Isha's saddle—all women rode cross-saddle, then, like men. Herodias gave another whispered order, then brooded on the fight, while her messenger sped away to her infantry-guard at the gate under the curve of the seats.

Galloping to a safe distance Bar Ad turned and sent stone after stone whizzing at the three horsemen who were left. One fell. Preferring staff to sling-stones—for the staff only stuns while sling-stones kill—the other two dropped their broken spears, drew sword, crouched

behind shield and rode at him. Bar Ad met them at speed. They had no chance.

He turned then to the dismounted men who guarded Karis. Halting just too far off for them to rush him, he rapidly slung stone after stone while they crouched and dodged behind their shields. Before a stone went home, they separated and came at him, for they, too, preferred staff to sling. He rode them down and stunned each as gently as he could. The last man flung his sword at him unexpectedly and nearly turned the fortunes of the fight. Bar Ad felt the wind of it as it passed. When he was free to look around, Karis was on the nearest point of the bema, ready to step into his arms.

"I pulled him to the sand!" she boasted. "You saw!"

"Yes, brave, oh, brave! Now kiss me, slip behind me and cling close—so close that we must go together—for here comes death, dear."

During the last few minutes more and more men of Herod's infantry had slipped from their seats, and pushed through the gate at the curve, so that they filled the whole south end of the arena. Now they moved into action, forming line. Stretching across from wall to wall, on both sides of the bema, the solid mass flowed inexorably down on Bar Ad. He gave way toward the Romans.

"Pilate," purred Isha blandly, "Sejanus himself would not blame you for withdrawing your century of horse, lest these two friendly forces quarrel when they meet."

Pilate glanced down at the letters from Minucius, then raised his hand.

At the snarling blare of the clanging Roman trumpets everything hushed and halted—Bar Ad, the cheering multitude, Herod's mercenaries—everything but one. The long impassive line of mailed Roman horsemen which, motionless as a palisade, had closed

the open end of the arena, flashed into life, broke up, wheeled into sections and rode off. Bar Ad waved thanks to Pilate with John Baptist's staff and put the best horse in Arabia to speed.

XXXI

Bar Ad left Karis at Capernaum, with Mary Mother, and plunged into the wilderness.

At Passover he came back to Jerusalem, clear-eyed and worn with fasting. He found that all the women had come up together this year. The sense of crisis was upon them. Jesus Himself had met them on the Galilean border and come with them.

The women were depressed. "We are all frightened," explained Karis. "Mary Mother does not agree with the Twelve and Seventy that the crucifixion and death Jesus predicts are parables. The men are so joyfully sure! They think the three days' burial a three days' imprisonment. They think the resurrection means that He will take the world, or make the first move toward it; for He has said that He must go away—presumably, to Rome!"

"I will not talk much with them, then, for fear that they condemn me," mused Bar Ad. "I notice that He looks at His mother almost all the time; and she at Him."

"The Twelve think we are but women and He a tremendous genius who, like most geniuses, is incompetent and needs guidance—all but Judas. Judas has fallen silent and I do not know what he thinks."

"How far the Pharisees' poison has worked in," reflected Bar Ad sadly. "I will go circumspectly and be silent also. Will you stay with me or with the women?"

"Oh, leave me with the women. I am some use—at least, I think I am some use—to His dear mother."

A week before Passover those disciples of John Baptist met together who had enlisted under Bar Ad to punish Herod. There were only two thousand of them,

for only those were taken who were fairly skilful with both staff and sling. They gathered at the pool of Elijah in the wilderness of Ephron. Among them were several who served Shalluq and, naturally, a sufficient number of men from Herod, Annas and Pilate to keep them fully informed. Also there were spies all round, in all the gullies and hills, to keep in touch with these; an elementary move which, fortunately, had not occurred to Shalluq, who was new at espionage.

When every one was in and an hour or two of grace allowed, Bar Abbas tightened a ring made of his hundred bandits and laid well out from the pool the night before. They left sentries to prevent the approach of others and brought in every living soul they found watching—about twenty in all. Bar Ad, in Bar Abbas' place, would have shut these in the cave and contemptuously freed them when all was over. Bar Abbas though had wormwood in his soul. He scourged till they confessed, then crucified the score of them. They writhed and groaned and died while Bar Abbas organized his two thousand farmers and tradesmen into squads and companies between their crosses. He also stripped them, gave them camel's-hair cloths, served out staff, sling and sheepskin and long Galilean knife for each and stained their skins to imitate sunburn. He told them that there were as many spies among them still as those already crucified.

"Therefore," he said, "we will not attack Herod as he comes up to Passover, because they must have warned him. We will do better; though what it is you shall not know as yet. But you shall dip your fingers in Herod's blood and dance with Salome, having her mother's head upon a platter, as you planned."

"Where's Addai bar Ad?" called one man, greatly daring.

"Peg that man out for speaking in my ranks. Gag him and let him look upon the crosses for an hour, then

release him. Do not hurt him, because his question is natural and reasonable. Addai bar Ad, the Nazarite, the friend of John the Baptist, will be here in due time.

"As long as Herod's spies stay with us they can do no harm and must fight as usefully as any one. The one thing above all which must not happen is that any man slip away. Therefore it is necessary that every captain of five be responsible with his life for the men under him. If he lose a man he dies for it. But it is just possible that one of the spies may be a captain of five. Therefore, if a captain of five desert, the four men under him and the captain of ten over him shall die."

The two thousand looked at the twenty already dying on their crosses and shuddered. From that time every captain of five shepherded his men as tenderly as infants; while his men watched him every minute of the day and slept with him at night. Also, the squads did sentry-duty together.

Therefore, in spite of Bar Ad's arrangements for news, an unarranged-for Nazarite brought it. He came to him in the temple, on the day of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Thousands of small boys, the little "Sons of Precept" come up for confirmation, had just finished that march in column which goes with the Hosanna chorus. Their fathers marched as a fringe beside them, and Jesus, with His following, stood conspicuously on the temple steps and watched. The Nazarite asked for orders.

"Concerning what?" said Bar Ad.

"Concerning false Nazarites, Addai bar Ad."

"What Nazarites, Jochan?"

"Five hundred farmers and merchants, dressed as Nazarites, are on the edge of the great camp, two stadia beyond Scopus. They are armed with staves and slings. They keep to themselves, as we always do, but I know none of them. Their hair is too short and some of them are beardless boys. Who mocks our brotherhood?"

Bar Ad whistled softly. "Lead me," he said.

They passed through the middle city, near Shalluq. Shalluq had heard no news although five of the firm's men, enlisted for that very purpose, had been away a week. Bar Ad went slowly on through the north gate, past Golgotha and the slaughter-house and that temple to Jove where the legions left their Eagles, and so over the crest of Scopus, picking up two or three real Nazarites on the way. In the immense encampment around the city all sorts of people grouped together in parties.

Nazarites built no booths, so these were in an open space beyond the farthest arbors; but Nazarites did what they pleased, so nobody paid attention. They were so good an imitation that, from a distance, Bar Ad was doubtful, until he noticed that one man of every ten kept watch while the rest slept. He watched them for an hour and then gave orders.

"Jochan, you stay with me. The rest of you scatter. Go gather all the brethren you can. When each of you has ten lead nine to me and leave the tenth to gather more. Keep back among the booths until you find me."

Bar Ad sat down where he could watch, and did some careful thinking. Nazarites could encamp by themselves. Nazarites could march in column anywhere through camp or even city and no one would notice. Nazarites were restless. They might be stirring at any hour of the night and passers-by would merely think the desert-men were at some ritual business of their own. Above all, any attack on Herod would be blamed on the real Nazarites. What more natural than that the desert-men should break for once their custom of fighting only in self-defense and should avenge John's murder. Nobody fought at Passover—but then, Herod had never murdered a John Baptist before. Bar Ad was almost tempted to let the thing go on. The whole nation would endorse it. Evidently, Bar Abbas had a brain! Then

he thought of Roman soldiers carrying red slaughter through every innocent Nazarite school and cave. He thought of himself a hunted fugitive for life. He thought of Karis.

He and Shalluq had wondered at the unavoidable semi-openness of the enlistment. He understood it now. Bar Abbas had gathered brave and angry men but, after all, they were merchants, workmen and farmers. Then he had shut down on them with an iron discipline. Why did one man in ten stay wide awake as sentry? Bar Ad chuckled grimly. He knew Bar Abbas.

As sunset approached the false Nazarites wakened and began to stir. Bar Ad was in an agony. His own men had not come. At last he went into an empty booth and changed clothes with Jochan, emerging a man of the desert. The change was hardly made and Bar Ad watching in his place again, when he was gently but irresistibly seized from behind. Jochan disappeared. Turning, he found himself in the grip of two false Nazarites, with a dozen more behind them.

"What Nazarite watches Nazarites in camp and does not join them?" asked the larger of the two—an unmistakable brown-bearded giant.

"Hail, Eli son of Eli," said Bar Ad. "How goes the enlistment?"

"Who is it names—why, it is Addai bar Ad, John Baptist's friend, our general."

"You keep better watch here than I thought, Eli. I did not see you leave the camp."

"Because I did not leave it. We are message-bearers from another column. The crowd would notice and wonder at more than five hundred Nazarites together."

"Indeed? How many columns in all, then?"

"Four. We meet in the city an hour after sunset."

"Forward then. It is almost twilight now. Where is Bar Abbas?"

"With the southern column."

They moved quietly into the open space. It did no harm. The three-quarters pre-Passover moon gave plenty of light to walk and talk by, but not enough to make out from a distance how many men composed a compact crowd.

As soon as they had arrived, and the message was given, with the news that Addai Bar Ad, John Baptist's friend, had come, the man in command—he was one of Bar Abbas' old captains of fifty—threw the men into column and started them into the city. The signal was a great star in the east. The people paid no attention, for they were used to Nazarites marching, though never so many. The city gates stood open all night during Passover. Two steady streams of people flowed in and out until far into the night. The Roman guard, lounging beside the gateway, made a jest or two in Latin, saying that the mad Nazarites must have a religious function in the temple; but, since they did not keep step and came in irregular groups, the guard did not stop them.

The magnificent palace of Herod the Great in the upper city had been confiscated by the Roman Government and was used by Pilate; but Herod of Galilee had a palace of his own a quarter of a mile away. There was a little square midway between them, no more than where three streets met and broadened a little, but enough. Silently Bar Ad's column halted and parted down the middle to let a few civilians pass. One civilian came up from the rear—Jochan. He passed, when halted, by saying he had a message for Bar Ad. He had hardly time to whisper that thirty of the brethren were at the rear of the column, having followed it from the booths, when the commander called Bar Ad and went forward to the little square. Jochan fell in behind.

Then Bar Ad saw the cause of the halt. The other columns had flowed silently into the city through other

gates and met, and Bar Abbas, with a guard of a few bandits dressed as citizens, stood in the little open space and issued low-toned orders. Hearing the captain's report he whirled and spoke in a voice of repressed thunder:

"How came you here, Addai bar Ad?" he asked.

"To take command, even as you promised them, of the men you raised falsely in my name."

Bar Abbas looked around. The streets were packed solid with John Baptist's men, officered by bandits, and the bulk of those within hearing were therefore not bandits but John's men. By this time they knew Bar Ad. Therefore Bar Abbas answered:

"I had your warrant."

"It is a forgery then. I gave you none."

"You sent it to me by Jochanan bar Kaphar, with orders. Half of these men have seen it. Here it is."

"Give it."

"Certainly not."

"How's this, men? He will not show me my own warrant."

An ominous growl ran through the ranks. Bar Ad stepped swiftly forward and took the commission from Bar Abbas' hand. There was moonlight enough to see it.

"I recognize this," he said. "The signature is genuine. But I gave it for another purpose and to another man. Where is Jochanan bar Kaphar?"

"He fell ill of the burning fever and is dead."

"In the cave?"

"In the cave."

"Upon a cross?"

"No. In bed, well nursed."

"I have no doubt he was well nursed and tended, with watchers by his death-bed in full plenty. You are cruel. Yet your work here is masterly, Bar Abbas. This turning of your men to Nazarites would deceive

Satan himself. The first error that you made and the only one was breaking up your columns to pass through the gates so that Herod's spies among them could escape. It is the first and only chance you gave them and they took it. They have escaped. Check up and see. Therefore they have warned both Herod and the Romans. If you go on you lead these men to their death."

"Suppose spies have escaped, Bar Ad? No harm is done. It is too late. Herod holds a drinking-bout to-night. He has few troops. He has no time. Within ten minutes after his spies reach him we strike and take his palace. 'Tis well planned. To hold his palace and himself ten minutes is all we want."

"Then you escape, disguised as citizens, and leave all Nazarites to be hunted down? You know the Romans. I will not send my friends, John Baptist's men, to certain death. Look, all! I hold the papyrus high and tear it. I revoke and destroy the warrant."

Bar Ad had made an error. He looked, too. While all eyes were fixed on the papyrus held high in the moonlight Bar Abbas leaped and struck. Quick as he was, another was quicker. Jochan struck too, and, as he struck, he leaped between. Bar Abbas reeled back with a knife in his shoulder and Jochan dropped with a knife-thrust near his heart.

Then Bar Ad leaped. In silence he struck a dozen blows, grinding his teeth—such blows as, with all his skill and all his strength and all his practise, even he had never struck before. When his wrath broke, Bar Abbas and his immediate body-guard lay on the ground. He put his foot on Bar Abbas' chest a moment, then picked up Jochan's body in his arms:

"Man!" he said. "Man! I did not even know you loved me; and here you die for me!"

Jochan stirred. "They shall not kill you, Addai, because—because—you have walked with Jesus."

He gasped and died.

From the far rear there came a clash of arms, a shout, the ping, ping, patter of sling-stones on shield and helmet and then the clashing clang as an armed Roman fell upon cobble-stones.

Bar Ad spoke to the heads of the four columns.

"Men, you enlisted under me. You swore to obey my orders. I give you none—except to pass the word back that you are betrayed and that Bar Abbas is dead. Go forward and strike Herod if you like—and perish when Pilate fastens you, like pincers, between the two halves of the Roman garrison. This man, who thought he died only for me, has by his death saved all of you. Make way there! Give me a guard of honor! If Romans stop you, say that you bury a dead Nazarite. Back, silly sheep who did not know your shepherd. Back, you false Nazarites and let a dead true Nazarite pass. Back, sons of women, while a child of God goes to his last long home!"

The Romans called it an insurrection, because a number of houses were broken into and clothing stolen, a number of citizens were robbed in the streets and two killed and their clothes taken, and there was armed resistance to Roman legionaries. One column, as it retired, fought a rear-guard action with the garrison and two Romans were hit in the face and killed by sling-stones. Nobody else was hurt because the soldiers never got near enough to use their pila,—the short, heavy throwing-spears which are so terrible against unarmored civilians.

When men scattered down side streets and resistance melted, the advancing legionaries came upon a pile of eight or ten civilians in a little square. Three were still living, because they wore steel caps. Steel caps do not belong on Passover pilgrims, so the legionaries gathered them in and carried them to the Prætorium. There they were recognized; and news

thundered through the city that Barabbas, the robber chief, Barabbas the patriot, Barabbas the unconquerable and uncatchable, was taken at last. Nobody knew details except a hundred men at the heads of the four columns and they had quietly passed through a gate as guard of honor to a dead Nazarite and gone home. The rest of the men in the columns only knew that word had come down the line to scatter. Barabbas was dead and they were betrayed. Even the Romans themselves only knew that when, in answer to an alarm of insurrection, they had buckled on their armor, formed up and started toward Herod's palace, they ran into a dark street full of men who greeted them with such a storm of sling-stones that nobody could do anything until the first resistance weakened. It did not greatly matter. They had Bar Abbas—the hitherto elusive Barabbas and two of his lieutenants—and that was the main thing.

There was some search for Bar Ad, a disciple of Jesus, but he had disappeared. In the vast suffocating confusion of that multitude of three million, even the spies themselves hardly noticed that Balthazar, one of the Magi, had rejoined Jesus. The search was dropped in a few hours, for one of the robbers, when he came to, let slip the information, between curses, that it was Bar Ad who broke the insurrection and caused Barabbas' arrest.

Nothing much came of it, therefore, except the capture of Barabbas and the fact that Pilate and the garrison were wolfishly sore. Organized Hebrews, in numbers, had dared to make a stand against Romans. There had been bloodshed. Resistance had collapsed; but the shower of sling-stones proved that it could have been successful. There were only about six hundred Romans in garrison. They were held down to a minimum to avoid irritating the Passover mob. Their dominance, therefore, was really only imaginary.

Pilate and his centurions felt that their task was to use moral suasion on a quiescent volcano and the volcano had dared to erupt a little. They were uneasy and furious. It was an ominous mood for the next disturbance.

Next morning Jesus cleansed the temple again. Bar Ad was there with Karis and Lazarus. Jesus came through the gateway. He waved the Twelve aside and went on alone. The multitude also pressed aside and left Him room—not from reason, for He had often visited the temple quietly since the first cleansing, but from sheer instinct. Absolutely alone, among fifty or sixty thousand people, He walked to the far end of the vast court, where the cattle were kept. He took, as He passed, a handful of the small cords used to tie sheep from the hand of an unresisting shepherd. Seeing this, the multitude stampeded for the steps and porticoes on the vast sides of the tremendous square. A group of drovers gathered to oppose Him, came truculently forward—then turned and fled. He knotted a lash of the cords, passed to the far side of the cattle and raised His hand.

It had no need to fall. In one massed phalanx the bullocks broke their cords and charged together for the great gateway, the sheep following. Again He was surrounded by a halo of released and cooing doves as He threw down their wicker cages. Again Bar Ad felt the pressure of a gigantic will. It halted and came back to him, examined and passed on. Most of the money-changers gathered up their coin and fled, but again Jesus overturned the tables and spilled on the pavement the coin of those who left it. Again He halted, not far from the great gate, and, turning, said: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

In the meantime, a man on crutches slipped behind Him, threw away his crutches and knelt down. An-

other followed Him and then another. Then the lame and the sick and the deaf and the dumb and the blind of all that vast multitude seized their opportunity. The cattle had given notice enough outside. The blind beggars who sat there tapped their way through the gates, groping; and, when He turned to go, Jesus found Himself face to face with a mass of human misery that knelt with outstretched arms and begged for healing while more and more came running every minute to add themselves to that insurmountable barrier.

"He needs me now," said Bar Ad. "Lazarus, take Karis home."

"Yes," agreed Karis. "It is His last miracle. He needs you now."

XXXII

In gasping haste Bar Ad hurried to Joseph of Arimathea when the healing was over. He found him closeted with Nicodemus.

"John Baptist predicted this before he died," burst out Bar Ad, hardly waiting to greet Him. "He said the end is death."

"Jesus might have muddled on in the provinces for years," mourned Joseph. "He knows His own plans best; but, had He held off only a few days more——" He sighed.

"The saddest thing about it all," mused grizzled Nicodemus, "is that He has no quarrel with honest money-changing, nor with the certified and inspected sacrifices. His anger is not against money-changing, but against money-changing in the temple."

"Does He really *want* to get Himself killed?" asked Joseph.

There was a moment's silence, while they digested this, then Bar Ad asked:

"What will the priests do, Joseph?"

"Arrest and try Him, probably on a charge of blasphemy—He has applied to Himself the Ineffable Name—then turn Him over to Pilate for execution."

"Joseph, there is no punishment for blasphemy under Roman law. What does Pilate care for theological quarrels among Jews?"

"They will raise a tumult."

With slow dismay Bar Ad felt his carefully-built-up structure of protection slipping. "When will the arrest be made?" he asked.

"Just after Passover. 'Not at the feast,' said Annas, 'Lest it stir up the multitude.' He is therefore safe in

the city and at Bethany, for His guard of stalwart Galileans could resist long enough to start a riot. If Annas put Him into the hands of the Romans no one would dare resist—but it takes hours to gather Romans and He moves constantly. Sanhedrim spies report His every movement of course, but, by the time they marked Him down in some retired spot and sent for Romans enough to overpower His Galileans, He would go on again. Therefore He is quite safe as long as He keeps moving—unless Annas knew where He meant to go. If some one who knew His plans beforehand told Annas of some quiet place to which Jesus planned to retire, He might be taken. No one will do that, so, till the crowd scatter, He is safe enough."

"The crisis, then, will come a day or two days after Passover, when the crowd has scattered?"

"More likely three days, Bar Ad."

"There is a reasonable chance that Sejanus' order to Pilate to protect Him and send Him to Tiberius is in Cæsarea now, or will be in a day or two."

"Could you not hasten it in any way? An hour may make the difference."

"I could not hurry the official dispatch, Joseph; but my own letters from Minucius might serve to restrain Pilate till it comes. An intelligent messenger with a swift horse might easily save six hours or more with them between the ship-side and Jerusalem."

"Whom can you send?"

"Send no one," burst out Nicodemus. "In matters of such great importance, go yourself."

Bar Ad rode all that night, praying, and the next midday found him in Cæsarea. No ships had come in for a day or two, but more than one was expected at any time. Dressed as an ordinary Jew, Bar Ad was in no danger of arrest. He hunted out his friend Alba, that decurion of cavalry whom he had stunned in the arena at Sepphoris, and through him bribed himself into ac-

quaintance with the dispatch-riders who carried messages to and from Pilate at Jerusalem. Everything was quiet there as late as Wednesday night.

On Thursday, at sunset, a great trireme hove in sight from the west and etched herself vividly against the evening sky, like jet on gold. She was too clumsy to be anything but Roman. Bar Ad should have been eating Passover with somebody—presumably Shalluq's Cæsarean correspondent—but had no heart to do it. He was too uneasy. The wind fell calm, so she came in under oars, and Bar Ad waited on the quay. She proved to be the *Minerva,* of Ostia, and she hung outside for hours before making harbor, because there was a partial eclipse of the moon. The full moon should have been as bright as day and plenty good by which to enter port. Instead, it turned rusty-red, like old dried blood, and, for a long time, all the sea was darkened. The gloom passed, after a while. The sea turned burnished silver again and the *Minerva* nosed her slow way in behind the breakwater. Bar Ad met her with a shore-boat. She brought no letters for him, but reported good weather all the way and said the *Venus,* a bireme, had cleared from Ostia for Cæsarea three days before her.

It was too late to go ashore and so, by virtue of a piece of silver and the courtesy of her captain, Bar Ad snatched a few hours of uneasy sleep upon one of her divans. He woke with a sickening sense of apprehension concerning Jesus. In such a case old Malachi, or even John Baptist, would have prayed, put his arms on his knees and his head on his arms, made his mind a blank, then let it fill with pictures and so learned what had happened, for the pictures would have been true. Bar Ad did not take time for this for, in his case, the pictures were never true, only symbolical. They had to be interpreted and might be interpreted wrongly. He knew all that he needed. Jesus was suffering and in immediate danger, and the order for his protection

should be brought as soon as possible. At red dawn a steward called him. The *Venus* was in sight far in the northwest, her sails pale blood-of-roses. He ran aloft and watched them change to gold and then to snow. She helped the breath of west wind with her oars, but came so slowly that, at last, Bar Ad hailed another shore-boat and was rowed out to meet her. Among the crowd gazing over her poop-bulwarks was Byssus. He leaned far out and waved, cheering.

"Byssus," shouted Bar Ad, as soon as he made sure, "are you successful or is Minucius dead?"

"Minucius dead? Boy, he has become a friend of Cæsar. The order you asked for is on board. These letters contain copies"—and Byssus waved a packet of papers.

Then Bar Ad cheered.

"Will your captain let you drop them to me?" he called at last: "It is a matter of life and death."

"Is there yet time?"

"Just barely time. Every half-minute is of value."

Byssus disappeared and came back in a moment with the captain.

"I can not let any one ashore yet," the captain decided, "not even the steward of the Augustan Minucius; but letters—and from a friend of Cæsar—will you let me break the seals and glance through them?"

"Gladly," agreed Byssus.

"Lower them, then, and I will look the other way."

"We lost three days by a storm under Cyprus," said Byssus, as they waited.

"I see you show the marks. Hurry the captain with the letters. Have you money enough?"

"Plenty."

"Then I will leave you to come on later to Shalluq's house at Jerusalem. Karis is there and well."

"My love to her. Here are the papers."

Byssus carefully lowered the packet, with a cord,

and Bar Ad paid his boatmen to race ashore, reading as he steered. He ran to the inn, and was in the saddle and out of the city almost before the bireme was fast to the quay.

It is a little over seventy miles from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. The roads were paved and, like the Galilean roads outside Sepphoris, crowded, though with Samaritans. Jews stayed at home on Passover. The distance could be done in, perhaps, eight hours, with relays of post-horses. Bar Ad cleared the suburbs of Cæsarea at about eight o'clock. The Roman post-horse system extended wherever Roman roads ran, and therefore permeated Palestine, though Hebrews never used it. Bar Ad, by every rule of the Pharisees, damned himself this day; for he not only used it now, but used it upon Passover. He could ride, he had money for tips and fees, and he knew a good horse.

Bar Ad should have been drunk with success, for what he carried twisted in his girdle not only made Jesus absolutely safe but, in a little while, a year or two, would lift Him as Overlord above all the world, and that without bloodshed. He should have visioned the Empire growing clean, women made safe and chaste, slaves free, men honest. He should have dreamed kingdom after kingdom upon the edges of the Empire, joyfully entering into league with it and with one another, until the swarming millions of Babylonia and of Persia beyond, with teeming and populous Hind beyond Persia and Cathay beyond Hind, bowed down to Jesus and were cleansed. He should have galloped ramping and cheering. Instead, he rode in heartbreak. Just what was happening he did not know, but something within him knew and, grieving, tried to tell him. Yet, he had time enough. Jesus had spoken of crucifixion—but even crucified men live three days upon the cross and could be taken down and nursed back to health again.

He swept across the Plain of Sharon, an irrigated

garden where even the stony walls beside the road were tapestried with roses, and began the long stubborn climb into the hills, nursing his mounts by every trick and wile known to a skilful horseman. Although it was Passover the roads were crowded, for he was in Samaria. Still, they were not as congested as near Jerusalem, or beyond mighty Sepphoris. Two changes of horses and a little less than three hours brought him to the city of Samaria. There he lost time in finding the post-house and changing and more among the crowds; for, though fallen from her ancient glory, Samaria was still a city and still crowded.

Then the road turned south along the backbone of the hills. He swept through the defile between Mount Gerazim and Mount Ebal, valley of blessings and of curses, left Sychar on his left, clattered by Jacob's well and crossed the Samaritan border into Judea at Shiloh. Five changes of horses and a little less than five hours had brought him a little more than forty miles, and it was midday.

There he ran into darkness. From the look of the sky he judged it made by clouds—volcanic clouds—as if of Sinai in eruption, to the south. He had heard of such things, though he had never seen them. He did not *see* them now. Behind him was blue sky, before him blackness. For half a dozen miles dim light came from behind him, but at Shiloh he plunged into black darkness and it was night around him on the noonday earth and worse than night; for night has stars.

At Shiloh he found the Roman dispatch-rider who had left Cæsarea at daybreak. Knowing each other, they joined forces and, with threats and money, bullied the frightened hostlers into bringing them out two fresh horses, by torch-light, and giving them the torches. By this means they pushed on to Bethel, though slowly. The roads were now as empty as the desert. They led their horses into Bethel but could get no others. The

shaking Hebrew hostlers could not be forced to action, by money nor by blows.

Bar Ad left the dispatch-rider here, girded up his loins, helped himself to a fresh torch from the relay-station and ran on, on foot, in the long slow swinging trot of the Nazarite which eats up miles. Now that he was alone, he more than once caught himself sobbing as he ran. Whatever it was that happened was nearly over. It seemed a pity that so much wisdom, such desperate exertion, so many prayers should be in vain—so many prayers! The thought stuck in his heart. Could it be that, after all, in the long last, when it comes to the climax, God does not help, but leaves us to ourselves? He put the thought from him in horror, but it came back, ran by his side and gibbered at him. Could it be true that God forsakes the righteous? Could it be true that God had forsaken him—no, not him—Jesus of Nazareth? If so, what was the use? He stopped, stood still a moment in absolute blackness and perfect silence, then spurred himself on. Then, as he swung into his stride again, the solid earth under him began to move and grind. The road swayed viciously, like a ship at sea. He stumbled and fell, rose and kept on. The earthquake stopped. Then, at Ramah, faintly, far-off before him, a cock crew.

Immediately it began to grow a little lighter. He could see his hand before his face. Before he entered Ramah he flung the butt-end of his torch away, for it was gray dawn again. At Ramah, in mad haste, he exchanged half the money in his girdle for a horse and spurred like a thunderbolt into the last stage toward Jerusalem for, from horsemen at Ramah who had left Jerusalem that morning, he had his news. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, grown very bold at last, had begged the body of Jesus from Pilate and stood at Golgotha, weeping, while their servants

and the soldiers took it down. From the sunken road below them a horseman looked up, then wheeled and circled round to join them. He dismounted, staggered up to Joseph and thrust an opened letter into his hands. Joseph read it aloud, the sunset light falling like blood across the page.

"These, sent to Minucius the Augustian by courtesy of Sejanus. A copy.

"Sejanus to the Excellent Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea Samaria and Iturea, greeting—

"On receipt of this you are to send Jesus of Nazareth, the good Physician of Galilee, to cure great Tiberius. Treat Him with all honor as an Augustan, a friend of Cæsar."

Joseph handed the letter to Nicodemus while Bar Ad, staggering forward, received the dead body of Jesus into his arms.

Now there were certain women of the disciples standing afar off, watching; among them, Karis. They recognized Bar Ad and, seeing him stagger, Karis, with Martha of Bethany, came forward. Karis took him to Shalluq's house where he passed the night, his head upon her knee, her hand on his forehead. Sometimes she spoke gently, telling what little he demanded of the story of the day. Sometimes she sang very softly. More often she sat still, while he slept in snatches, living over his journey and waking again at each fresh difficulty on the road. He lived over the death of Jesus, also, murmuring in his sleep details she had not told him. Something inside him knew.

"Karis," he said, rousing: "I wish I could remember my mother. She must have been like you."

He rose at dawn, weary but calm. Karis had saved his reason. Lazarus came at sunrise, sent by Martha to make inquiry. He gave Bar Ad more details, adding:

"This is now under guidance. Jesus is gathering

the fruits of victory in fields so far beyond our vision we only know that they are spiritual. There's where the unexpected happens—where He is."

"Gathering—the fruits—of victory?" asked Bar Ad.

"Certainly. Meantime, others are here on guard, to do the ordinary needful things. Remember that I know. If they need us we shall know it within ourselves. Make silence in your heart and listen for an inner voice. Pray, then think what needs most to be done."

Bar Ad looked long and wonderingly at Lazarus, for these were secrets handed down by Nazarites and Essenes from the ancient schools of the prophets, who had them from Samuel and Elisha, who had them from God. Lazarus went on:

"Jesus intends to rise on the third day. Everybody knows it—Annas—Pilate—the Twelve—the Seventy—the small boys on the street. No one believes it except you and me and a few others, like Mary and Karis and Mary the Lord's mother, who have some special information. What do the prophets say, and your wise mysteries of many nations?"

"They say He rises," slowly conceded Bar Ad. "Wise men knew and foretold it two thousand years ago."

"What will you do? Make silence in your heart, first, and ask guidance."

"Why, I—could be—most useful—making sure the Twelve, the Seventy and, perhaps, the Nazarites do not scatter."

At John Mark's house several of the Eleven were gathered and about a third of the Seventy. Peter was missing. He would do no harm to himself but, in Thomas's opinion, would kill Judas. "We can do nothing on the Sabbath," Thomas ended. "But, as you say, on the day following we really ought to gather in some kind of farewell meeting, the Eleven and the Seventy together. At Passover supper Jesus told us to

memory whenever we drank wine. Some of us will be there to do it then."

"Has anybody mentioned resurrection, Thomas?"

"The women have but we should doubt the sanity of any man who did so. Jesus foretold His political death—three days or three years of retirement or imprisonment or both. He failed. He is dead and buried. He was mistaken."

Those of the disciples and the Seventy gathered in the courtyard were as unbelieving as the Twelve. They agreed that a last meeting was reasonable; a due respect paid to the memory of Jesus. They agreed also, since nothing could be done on the Sabbath, that the meeting ought to be on the night following the first day of the week; at night, since there was risk of arrest if the chief priests heard. They promised to spread the word quietly among the rest of the Seventy and the disciples.

It took all Sabbath to pass word for a meeting of the Nazarites. They met, perhaps a hundred of them, at night, on the summit of the Mount of Olives, overlooking Bethany. There Thaddeus spoke with authority, for they held him now the greatest man among them; and he spoke freely, for they were themselves instructed mystics and did not think one necessarily a madman because he held that there are two worlds, with no impassable barrier between. Old Malachi was there—Bar Ad had spent half a day to make sure of that. He had even provided a camp-fire, because the old man might be cold. He knew that it would gleam for miles from the mountain-top and hundreds would investigate; but he knew also that, when they found the men around it were Nazarites, they would turn and go away. He spoke with power, ending:

"Therefore, brethren, I would have Jesus of Nazareth, when He comes, received among a group of Nazarites with scrip and sling and staff; and, as John Baptist's men opened His ministry to Israel, so I would

have John Baptist's men close it and open His new ministry to all the world and earth and heaven."

He did not carry his audience. They sat silent so long that no one but a desert-trained Oriental could have endured it. At last old Malachi rose.

"Where is John Baptist?" he asked. Then he called up to the stars, "John! John Baptist! My boy! My boy John!" His great voice echoed over all the hills, then sank to silence.

"I had two boys," he went on at last, "sons, not of the flesh but of the spirit. I trained one. The other came to see him and, for a little time, I taught them both. I thought—my boy John thought—that Jesus was Messiah. The slow years passed until there came a time when John was near to death for Jesus—and Jesus let him die. He did not save him. Now Jesus, too, is dead. When the Messiah comes on earth he shall be the Son of God. He shall be slain. He shall lie three days in the tomb and rise again and take the world with power; but Jesus—Jesus—how can Jesus be Messiah? He could have saved my John—and John is dead."

Malachi sat down and Bar Ad rose again, saying:

"If you must have it! I was the only Nazarite who was there, so you must take my word for it; though you may later verify it by a dozen of John's disciples! Malachi, John bore witness before he died, that he was wrong. He ought to have joined Jesus. John lies upon a hilltop in Judea now, and Jesus lies in Joseph of Arimathea's garden, because—John being himself the witness—because John sinned in not joining Jesus."

Bar Ad turned and strode into the dark.

"Wait, Addai," called Malachi.

"What is it?"

"I will not lose a third boy because two whom I loved are gone. Why did you not tell before what John said—I know, I know: you could not bear to accuse John. Perhaps—perhaps—O God of Israel, perhaps

all my boys are worthy!" He turned to the Nazarites: "You—and you—come with me. I may need help and witnesses. The rest go back to the city. Addai, take us to the nearest height overlooking Joseph of Arimathea's garden."

The way was long. It was near dawn when they reached the outlook of the women—a place where the road twisted over the hill in such a way that it was possible to see the tomb.

"Your hand is cold, Malachi," said Thaddeus.

"No matter, Addai. The watch will not be long. Is it for nothing that we Nazarites, for two thousand years, have set a watch at the tomb of every brother which ends at dawn? It is the last hour of the last night. The expectations of two thousand years come to their climax now."

They looked down on the sentry, betrayed by the twinkle of his spear-point in the firelight. He paced before the tomb. The fire cast flickering shadows of sleeping soldiers on the trampled flower-beds round it. Bar Kalmar, one of the Nazarites, spoke softly:

"Look up! Look up, instead! Look up!"

"Mine eyes are old," said Malachi. "What do you see?"

"An armed man in the sky! A blaze of light. The soldiers rise. The armed man descends. He smites the tomb-door with his sword. The stone rolls away. He sits upon it. There comes so great a radiance from the tomb the Romans fall blinded!—nay I am blinded, too!"

They were all silent; for, at this moment, the same long low rumbling at the base of the hills which all had heard at the crucifixion came again and the road rose and fell under their feet like waves of the sea. When it passed northward the garden was dark.

"The Romans now light torches at the fire," reported Bar Ad. "Now, some of them are entering the tomb."

"If they come out and go away without closing it,"

said Malachi, "the climax of creation has come and the history of the universe has opened on its hinges."

"They are still inside."

"If they find nothing there, then what we have just seen will be retold daily as long as earth lasts, though it last a million years."

"They come out. They form column. They march away."

"Leaving the tomb unclosed?"

"Leaving the tomb unclosed. Shall I go look in it?"

"You would but find it empty."

"But, where is Jesus?"

"Our Lord has risen indeed."

XXXIII

THADDEUS did not go to his own meeting.

He took old Malachi, with his two Nazarites, back to Shalluq's house, but could not persuade the vigorous old man to rest.

"What?" blazed Malachi, "sleep now? Boy, in three thousand years, in all the Nazarite schools together, there must have been a thousand masters of the lodge. Each has prayed God each day that he might be the man to represent the order when Messiah rose. Out of that goodly fellowship I, unworthy, am the one chosen. Should I sleep now, those saints and prophets of the Lord would leave their last long sleep to take my place. Take me to John Mark's house, for news, and stand my sponsor with the brethren."

They found Peter and John just back from the tomb. It was empty. Peter affirmed that the Sanhedrim had removed the body, and John that He had risen as He said. Thaddeus and Malachi told what they had seen at daybreak. No one but John believed. While they were speaking, Mary Magdalene came running, gasping that she had seen Jesus, touched Him, clung to Him, but had first mistaken Him for the gardener. She also spoke of angels. James sent one of the Seventy to the prætorium for news, and John Lightning went to his house to find the other women. The messenger from the prætorium raced back with a distorted story gleaned from Roman guards, confirming Malachi and Thaddeus. Soldiers said some one had stolen the body while they slept. John came back with women—Maria of Alphæus, Mary of Bethany and others. They had seen Jesus, touched and clung to Him. He said that the disciples should go before Him into Galilee. They, too, spoke of angels.

Well on toward noon, when it grew plain that John and the women were the only ones who believed, Malachi drew Thaddeus to one side.

"They slight our tales," he said, "for Nazarites are mystics, and so are women. The disciples are now courteous to one another from long companionship and true affection; for they have spent three years with Jesus. It can not last. Soon, they will quarrel. Jesus must show Himself again."

"Dear man," snapped out Bar Ad, addressing Malachi but speaking to them all, "He had to die to be delivered from these dunderheads. Will He come back to such? They have no faith, no common sense, no energy. They have not even settled Judas."

Malachi stroked his great beard and quoted: "'Vengeance is mine, I will repay' saith the Lord."

"God uses human agents," countered Bar Ad, "and He appoints them by some manifest sign. We need not think of Annas and Caiaphas. God has appointed Magi to take care of them. We need not think of Pilate. In very shame Caius Caligula must crush the man who crucified that good Physician who could have cured Tiberius. I am appointed to destroy Barabbas, and, with him, mine own old enemy, Simon, because I alone have the power. It seems that I am appointed to punish Judas also, by the sign that I am the only one here who will *do* anything." He turned and strode out.

At Shalluq's house they found Marcus Marcellus Murio, come in that morning from his desert journey, worn, weary but triumphant. He had no doubt at all of the resurrection.

"Magi predicted it before I left," he said, "from the old prophecies. I tried to get here before Passover, but lost four days through sand-storm after sand-storm, which killed our camels. It does not matter now. I have delivered letters from the Magi at the

high priest's house. Within reigns consternation. The very maid who keeps the gate there knows that Christ is risen."

Before the weary little man had done more than repeat the barest outlines of the official dispatches which would soon come to Annas, Nazarites knocked at the door and asked for Bar Ad. They had already heard the rumor of his speech to the Eleven and the Seventy concerning Judas.

"Do something about Judas quickly, Addai," they begged. "Or set some other than Nazarites to watch him."

"I set none to watch Judas," denied Bar Ad. "Who said so?"

"Your friend Kleon said you would need him. After the darkness and the earthquake we chanced upon Judas, wandering, and followed him. He went to the barren fig-tree beyond Bethphage, the one that Jesus blasted, and there hanged himself in his girdle. Kleon said that was too easy a death and cut him down. Judas has fallen down and burst asunder in the midst, and now crawls, dragging."

"What?" exclaimed Bar Ad, starting back. "In body?"

"Oh, no! His body's whole enough. In spirit. He sold himself, thinking that he sold Jesus, and can not spend the money. His mind has gone to pieces, and his will. The devil that dwelt in him held him together. Now he is chaos, like a corpse three months dead."

"In body?"

"No, in spirit—although his body can not live. He neither eats nor sleeps. He dies of heartbreak, from within outward."

"I will come look at him. Where is he?"

"We do not know. He hurries through the city, then through the great camp round it, in search of

crowds. At dawn and sunset he comes to where he hanged himself—the fig-tree Jesus blasted at Bethphage. Wherever he goes two of our men follow. If he had any friend who can not see souls, bring him."

"When Jesus sent the Twelve out two by two, Thomas was his companion."

"Bring Thomas, then, to the blasted fig-tree near Bethphage, at sunset."

When they had gone and Bar Ad turned to go in, a guttural whisper stopped him:

"Addai bar Ad—Bar Ad of Armageddon—wait."

"Kaleph the One-Eyed, in Jerusalem, by broad daylight," asked Bar Ad, recognizing him, "what do you want?"

"Orders, Excellency."

"Chance to plant knife in my ribs, rather. Why come to me?"

"Sir, you are still lieutenant of our band, under Bar Abbas. We never put another in your place."

"I left you years ago."

"You never left. The Romans captured you."

"Then I resign."

"You can not, save to Bar Abbas."

"You should have thought of that before you stabbed me on the road to Jericho."

"Sir, that was years ago. Forget that knife and I'll forget my grinders. We don't know what to do."

"Go ask Bar Abbas."

"It is about Bar Abbas we don't know. He's ill, very ill, in the lower city."

"Where are the captains of fifty?"

"Crucified."

"Give me your knife and guide me."

Kaleph led Bar Ad into the cellar of a great tenement-house, almost like those at Rome. There was a guard outside the door with a sword. Bar Ad took the sword and herded the two bandits before him into

the cellar—a large low place, with arches, lighted by a torch at each end.

Under one torch huddled a dozen half-armed bandits. Under the other, at a table, sat a large man in browned armor, his head bowed on his arms, a staff on the table before him. Midway between, a couple of half-stunned men were rubbing their heads and rising.

"This is Addai bar Ad, our lieutenant, absent twelve years on leave," loudly whispered Kaleph the One-Eyed.

One or two bandits knew him and made the salute which gladiators give the Emperor.

"What is the matter, boys?"

"We tried to disarm him," answered a captain of ten, pointing.

"I'm broken," said one of the half-stunned men, "not he."

The large man raised his head. In spite of his companions Bar Ad had to look twice to make sure it was Bar Abbas. There was no lurid fire in his eyes.

"Jesus of Nazareth is dead instead of me," he said.

"Jesus of Nazareth is risen," corrected Bar Ad.

"I heard so," exclaimed one of the men. "I told you so."

"Now, here is marvel greater than resurrection," wondered Bar Ad. "Devils believe and tremble. Why?"

"Because He said He would."

"Jesus of Nazareth is dead," repeated Bar Abbas, mechanically, "instead of me."

"Jesus is risen," answered Thaddeus. He walked quietly to the table, took away the staff, removed Bar Abbas' sword from its sheath and the knife from his girdle and asked: "Bar Abbas, do you know me?"

"Addai bar Ad," said Bar Abbas, "Jesus is——"

"Risen," completed Bar Ad. Then, to the robbers:

"He will go with you, now. He will recover. Have you a place to take him?"

"Only the cave."

"Lead him there quietly, by night. When he comes to himself, obey him. In the meantime, live on your stored grain and gold and steal as little as may be, until I come."

Bar Ad left them and went and waited at John Mark's house for Thomas, who, when he came, proved to have already agreed to meet the Nazarites. He had even seen Peter and arranged to pick him up at the bridge over Kedron on the way. Both were utterly incredulous about the resurrection.

The blasted fig-tree was in a weed-grown, abandoned garden behind a fallen wall, in a ravine of the Mount of Olives, on the edge of Bethphage toward Bethany. They found old Malachi already there with half a dozen Nazarites, seated in a half-circle round the withered tree.

"When you called in our Nazarites, Addai," explained Malachi, stroking his great white beard, "you thereby called in me."

"Of course," assented Bar Ad, and the three sat down.

Nobody had anything to say, so, being Nazarites, they said nothing. Malachi prayed silently. The spilled gold of the sunset turned to blood and then to ashes of penitence and then to darkness, and Judas did not come. After a time a cock crowed, high on Olivet, announcing future moonrise.

"Judas betrayed, but I denied him," gulped Peter through his own white beard. "Who, then, am I to sit in judgment upon Judas?" He rose and stumbled off.

At last Judas came, growing suddenly out of the blackness, trailed by his two Nazarites, silent as wolves. He threw himself face down under the

withered tree. They sank to the ground and closed in, shadow against darkness. He must have known that they were there. He did not show it.

Minute by long minute the tension grew. The half-circle, desert-trained, was still. Only their eyes were visible. At last Thomas, an oasis-man and without the inner vision, shifted his weight. Instantly Judas was on his feet while the two behind him crouched ready to spring.

"Sit down," ordered Thomas calmly.

Judas obeyed.

Bar Ad envied Thomas. His own voice would have croaked and cracked. But then, Thomas could not see what the rest saw.

The coming moon sent a faint growing grayness before her, but the only thing quite visible about the Nazarites was still their eyes. Then Judas spoke. His voice had changed utterly. It was glutinous.

"I did not mean it, Thomas," he explained. "I alone saw that He could—should—must use miracle only in self-defense, to save His life. He could help others as He pleased, but not Himself except in self-defense. Therefore no greater service could be done Him than to close every way until He had no choice but death or miracle. He guessed my plan, of course. He must have approved, for He told me to act quickly. I hemmed Him between miracle and death and then—then—then His power broke and He died. If I could die to bring Him back I would."

"Ask God's forgiveness, then."

"For what? It was no fault of mine. Jesus and I both misjudged Jesus' power. Unmeaning, He misled me. He was no fit Master of the world."

"Why, then, this horror?" asked old Malachi.

At that deep voice Judas whirled and peered, then set his back against the fig-tree, saying:

"Who, then, are you that judge? What do you

know of horror? Are you real? The horror is, God has no power. When it comes to the last test, God has no power. That is the horror—that God has no power! Jesus was good; weak, true, but good. He was the Son of God and almost liked me—did not approve of me, but cared—the only One in all the world that cared. I thought my service, giving Him needed chance to take the world in self-defense, would make Him really love me, setting us two together above nations. We both misjudged His power—God's power. I sent the Son of God—I sent the only One on earth that cared for me—to crucifixion; because, at the sheer crisis, power failed Him. I meant to help Him. He was insane, of course—who is not?—that would cure itself when the earth was His—His wild strange fancies—soft—earth's greatest Genius—but He was good. I did not care for the money—not much—I chose to spoil the Egyptians, that is all. But He was good. He came and looked at me to-day—or is it a dream?—but I betrayed Him. 'Twas His mistake—no fault of mine—He said He had all power and then He broke—God has no power. At the last test evil wins. Oh, I have betrayed innocent blood!"

"Jesus is risen," said Old Malachi. "Ask His forgiveness."

"Some one impersonates Him," reasoned Judas. "It must be so—He had no power—or else, you dream, as I do. Poor Judas has no girdle, now. Is it not strange that I, a well-meaning keen-brained man and the Lord's treasurer, through another's mistake and by no fault of my own, should fall into this plight? I can not eat nor sleep nor rest nor think; no, nor stop thinking."

"Twisted and fallen and burst asunder in the midst," said Malachi.

"Come," said Bar Ad rising. "We can neither judge nor help. We have no business here. We need not watch him, brothers, any more."

The trial of Judas caused Thomas and Bar Ad to miss the occasion in the upper chamber when Jesus first appeared to the disciples. They heard about it, though! Bar Ad believed, but Thomas was incredulous. The Ten were now as full of certainty as they were before full of doubt. They fell upon Thomas in a body, arguing to convince him. They brought such pressure on him that, at last, he rebelled.

"I know that you have all seen One whom you think Our Lord," he admitted, miserably. "It is not that I will not believe but that I can not. Unless I see in His hands the prints of the nails and put my fingers into the prints of the nails and put my hand into the wound in His side I can not drive out the suspicion that some one impersonates Him."

"I will go further," declared Bar Ad. "Though I believe and did so before any other here. I do not doubt that It is Jesus. It ought to be; but, so far, all His appearances are private. That does no good. What difference does it make to earth or heaven whether you believe or I? That is not enough. If Jesus be really the Son of God His rising must be for all generations of all nations of all the universe, now and for ever. Its truth can not depend on our words only. He must appear in public, not to chosen witnesses but to all who care to see, or else He can not be the Son of God."

Karis was there with Byssus—for Byssus had come up from Cæsarea. Both heard that speech; and both, to Bar Ad's wonder, resented it. The matter was debated by the disciples nightly for a week. Every one came in hopes they might again see Jesus. A week is a long time. That evidence had full sifting. From the debate rose certainty that they must go to Galilee with Thomas unconvinced, or else without him; and that something unknown impended which Jesus had called "Ascending up unto the Father."

It was not quite eventless. Karis grew more and

more angry with Bar Ad as he elaborated his position. The city government expanded its first crude theory, and the Passover millions scattered from the city convinced that the disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus while the guard lay insensible from a bolt of lightning. Also, somewhere down in the mysterious depths of the temple organization, some one took charge of the thirty pieces of silver Judas had thrown back into the temple and carried out the proper formalities for the purchase of land. The city needed a new graveyard for paupers. They bought the "Potters' Field," a red-clay area in the upper end of the valley of Gehenna, above the city garbage-heaps, for the purpose. Then they announced the fact.

Malachi's Nazarites no longer followed Judas but, naturally, when they passed him in the diminishing crowds of Passover, they noticed him and mentioned him to one another. For some days he had moved slower and, as the density of the crowd decreased, had wandered more in search of throngs into which to plunge. In the late afternoon, a week after Jesus appeared in the upper chamber, a couple of Nazarites reported to Bar Ad that a dead body, which they took to be that of Judas, lay on the edge of the Potters' Field under a little bank. "What's that to me?" he asked; but thought better of it and went with them.

Burial customs in Palestine were so complicated that it was really difficult to keep the law. Any one who touched a corpse became unclean until the evening and must not touch a living person until next sunset. A burial-permit in the new field would be hard to get, for Bar Ad could not afford to identify himself or Judas to the chief priests. It seemed simpler to bury the body after dark. He bought a small spade and timed their arrival just at dusk. It really was Judas, quiet at last.

They dug his grave where he had fallen, taking from

the body the otherwise empty purse in which was King Agbarus' letter.

"Now," mused Bar Ad, "I will go to Edessa and heal King Agbarus."

When they had leveled the grave and thrown away the spade, Bar Ad stood up and prayed: "Almighty and most merciful Father, who dost devise ways for those justly banished from Thy presence to return to Thee, this, who was once my friend, has wandered very far. Be gentle with him, Lord."

That night Jesus appeared to the Eleven, Thomas being present. Because of the burying of Judas, Bar Ad was not there.

XXXIV

Karis, for the first time in Bar Ad's life, was thoroughly indignant with him; the first time, for her anger at that last far-off dinner at Hippos had been feigned, while at Capri, after all, the fight was fair. She would not even accept his escort to Galilee, but took Byssus and Murio, who had grown great friends, and went with them instead, saying:

"You have so treated me as never woman bore from her man before in patience and I have borne it, because of your great goodness and because you believed in Jesus. You laughed at the stubborn unbelief of the Apostles, and I adored you. You threatened action when they did nothing, and I believed you. What did you do? Nothing! Your great plan for protecting Jesus failed. His resurrection proves it was but folly, and only the space of a few hours and God's own mercy kept us from being as bad as Judas. Then you missed Jesus for Judas—twice. Now, we are all a glory of faith and joy and you maintain that He who has risen is not Jesus."

"Karis, be just. I know that it is Jesus; but what I do maintain and it is manifest, though these blind leaders do not see it yet, is that, unless He does more than He has yet done, Jesus can not be the Son of God. I pass over the question of impersonation, though the world will not so pass it over. You saw and know Him and you testify that it is He. Yet this, dear, is not for us nor little Galilee nor for the Empire. It is for all time and for every nation and for eternity and generations yet unborn and earth and heaven,—and He appears in private and only to chosen witnesses! Can such a falling short be missed by the heartsick scrutiny of

millions? Will nations now unknown venture life eternal on Jesus with such a gap in the proof? He must appear in public, to thousands not chosen by Himself, in such a manner as to exclude all suspicion, even in those who do not know Him well, that it could be another, else the proof fails; and, if the proof fail, then his mission fails; and, if His mission fail, He is not the Son of God."

"Addai, you saved my body, Jesus my soul. You have my earthly loyalty, Jesus my heavenly. I love you, Addai—I love Jesus more. If you believe He is not the Son of God—divorce me, Addai."

"Jesus forbids divorce! Child, I believe and you misunderstand. He will do all He should."

"Then stop being wise and give your heart to Him."

On the road to Galilee Bar Ad plodded a weary way behind the others, mostly alone and silent. The Eleven and Seventy were too full of enthusiasm to spend much time upon him. Even Thomas and Kleon walked mostly with others and spoke to him courteously but casually. What rankled in the collective mind of the Eleven, almost as much as his insistance upon the need of public evidence, was King Agbarus' letter in his pouch and his assertion that, by its means, God marked him out as Jesus' messenger to Edessa, whether they would or no. It was quite true that the disciple who bore the letter would be the one accepted by Agbarus as from Jesus. That was self-evident.

Being alone, Bar Ad had time for thought. He tried to keep his mind on mighty things—the change that would come now on earth, for instance, and the rejoicings in Heaven. Instead he thought, with heartsick longing, mostly of Karis. He had not known how much he loved her all his life till he regained her. He had not known how much he loved her now until that perfect comradeship was broken and she had turned against him. Never before had he known her keen intellect to

falter; but now she misunderstood him and that grossly. For world-conversion more evidence really was needed. If he had doubted Jesus she would be right; but he no more doubted that Jesus would meet the obvious conditions than that the sun would rise; and Karis, for the first time in her life, was stupid. He had been very badly used. He had—and then he recognized self-pity, that suicide of souls, and, by exertion of his Nazarite training, put these thoughts from him.

At Capernaum Murio, Byssus, Shalluq and even old Malachi—for Malachi and Shalluq came with them—were cold; so, to avoid them and Karis, Bar Ad took to the hills to sleep and, for companionship, cultivated Caius Curio, the friendly centurion of Capernaum. Curio, Shalluq's acquaintance of a dozen years ago, raised his eyebrows as much as ever. He was still loaned to Herod's army; and though, by Roman rating, he ranked only as a centurion, he held under Herod what practically amounted to a legion, with prætor's pay, and was commandant at Capernaum. With Curio, Bar Ad rode out to the Horns of Hattin and saw Jesus when He appeared to the disciples upon the mount in Galilee.

This was the first time that Malachi had ever seen Jesus and he spent the rest of his life in telling of it in every school of the Nazarites and village of the Essenes; for which reason Nazarites and Essenes soon merged into the Church. Curio believed at once, but the black burden was not lifted from Bar Ad's soul, not even when Karis, when all was over, beckoned him to her. She asked:

"Does not this meet your expectations, Addai? He has appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, yea, and to you."

"True, Karis; but we were brethren—warned—all chosen witnesses and their friends."

With a despairing gesture Karis turned and joined the women.

Bar Ad saw Jesus a second time at John Mark's in

the upper city, on Ascension day. He and Malachi had spent the night in the street outside; for all knew something impended and, as Malachi asked: "Shall the climax of the world's history pass us unseen for want of a little watching?" John Mark had time to hurry off his messengers, for Jesus lingered in the upper chamber, talking to the Eleven, instructing them what to do concerning the Kingdom of God. Therefore when he came out, just before sunrise, it was into a street full of disciples who had been sleeping in John Mark's house and John Lightning's and in the great near-by houses of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

These houses were in the upper city. Even there the streets were full. Jesus led the disciples down through the district of the great eight and ten story apartment-houses and then through the streets of the bazaars. Everybody knew him. Thousands surveyed him from the shops and the heads of the cross-streets, other thousands looked down on him from housetops and from windows. Bar Ad pushed his way forward to where the women walked with Mary Mother, and spoke to Karis:

"This, Karis, is what I demanded and foretold."

"Oh, Addai, Addai, you were right and I was wrong!"

Karis looked up at him in smiles and tears and clung to his arm.

At the Jericho Gate there was congestion, for thousands were now following Jesus. Bar Ad was forced to a momentary halt at the gateway. There a man tapped him on the shoulder and, at the same moment, two grasped him from behind and a knife-point pricked his back under his shoulder-blade. "Escape, Karis!" he whispered, and dropped her arm.

His captors were temple police, the high priests' servants. They drew him aside from the current.

"Why do you stop me?" he demanded.

"Herodias has begged Annas for you," they answered. "She rightly said that we would find you following Jesus."

"Then I appeal to Pilate!" called Bar Ad. "Ho, Caius Curio"—for at the moment Curio, on horseback, was conspicuous in the crowd following Jesus and only a few feet away—"certify the sentries at the gate that I am a Roman citizen, arrested by Jews, and demand that I be taken before Pilate."

"I know this man," called Curio, pointing. "He is a friend of mine and a Roman citizen. His arrest is an outrage. Thaddeus, I will be back for you as soon as this is over."

The officer at the gate barked an order; and, though Bar Ad's captors tried to drag him into the crowd, the legionaries were too quick for them. In a moment he was in the hands of the Romans. In ten he was marching between two Roman soldiers to Pilate.

Normally, at this time, forty days after Passover, Pilate would have been in Cæsarea. He and Claudia had gone, instead, on a tour through Iturea, down toward the southern desert and visited the Princess Isha at Petra. They halted at Jerusalem on the way back because of the anxiety of Annas over the reports concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Bar Ad therefore found Pilate in the prætorium of the old palace of Herod the Great, on the western side of the city. At first he did not recognize Bar Ad, who was not dressed as a Nazarite, but in ordinary Jewish clothes.

"This man was arrested at the Golden Gate by temple police," reported his guard. "He appealed to your Excellency. Curio of Capernaum says he is a Roman citizen."

"I'm busy, now," said Pilate.

"Pilate, I am Lucius Curius Thaddeus, a Roman knight, the son of Lucius Curius Minucius, the friend of Cæsar."

"Pardon me, Thaddeus. I know you now. You look better than when I last saw you, in the arena at Sepphoris. Unshackle him, guards. Slaves, bring a seat. Sit down and listen, Thaddeus. I really am busy, terribly disturbed, over as strange a thing as ever Roman heard since the gods ceased to come to Latium! Go on, Rohi!"

"Jesus of Nazareth really is risen, sir," answered a little Jew who seemed to be one of the Roman spies.

"I met Him coming down from the upper city, His disciples round Him, followed a bit to make sure, then ran here to report."

"Nonsense!"

"Nay, Excellency, I know Jesus well. So did all men around me. It is He."

"You should have followed farther, Rohi, and learned who impersonates Him. Caius Carinna!"

The centurion of the guard saluted and came forward: "Here, Excellency."

"Take Rohi, here, with a decurion and ten horse. Search out this impostor. Bring him before me."

"Excellency, He passed our guard and went out through the Golden Gate," interposed one of the men who had brought Bar Ad, stepping forward and saluting. "He can be no impostor. We all knew Him. Publius, here, spoke with Him."

"What said He, Publius?"

The other guard strode forward and answered:

"Sir, we know Jesus well. He is a figure unmistakable and for days passed our post twice daily. When He came by this morning we all knew Him and saluted; for, in His written accusation, you yourself said He was a King. Then I called, 'Pardon, Lord,' for once I smote Him with a reed. He answered: 'Thou art pardoned, Publius.'"

"But the man is dead! Carinna, did not you report His death to me?"

"I did, sir. You sent me with a guard to order Petronius, centurion at the cross, to give His body to Joseph of Arimathea. We did so, first putting a spear-thrust through His heart, though He was dead already. Our legion ought to know when a Jew is dead."

"Find, overtake and bring Him to me; but with courtesy."

There was a stir in the inner door and Pilate's wife, Claudia Procla, hurried in, leaving a group of her women, veiled, just within the doorway.

"Oh, Pilate, Pilate, Pilate!"

"What is it, Domina?"

"Jesus of Nazareth! Now we *know* Him risen."

"How so?"

"Marcia, my old nurse, was in the city to bid Bar Shaphar, the great jeweler, bring wares to me. Jesus of Nazareth, alive, passed by. She saw Him from the shop. A great crowd went before and followed Him. She knew Him well, for she had watched Him at the trial. She called His name and knelt. He smiled and raised His hand. The mark of the spike was in it. Then He passed on and she came home, weeping, because she was a woman and a messenger and dare not follow. You would not believe the stories of the women, nor of the supper at Emmaus, of Thomas and the Ten nor of the five hundred on the Galilean hill. You smiled and said that they were the wild tales of natives—but Marcia is our own and Roman as we!"

"Excellency," reported the nomenclator, "a messenger from Annas, the High Priest."

"Admit him. Give your message."

"Sir, Annas and Caiaphas, High Priests, inform you that Jesus of Nazareth appeared this morning in the upper chamber of a house in the upper city, where His disciples gather. He walked a mile or more through the most crowded streets at their most crowded hour. Thousands there met Him. All who chose turned and

followed. Other thousands looked down from windows and roofs. They all report that it is Jesus. He has gone out of the Bethany Gate, toward Olivet—the Golden Gate—with a vast multitude, and the crowd still pours out to follow after Him. Caiaphas and Annas sent to say they hasten hither to consult with you, lest there be rioting in the city."

"Announce them when they come. What do you think of all this, Thaddeus?"

"That He has risen, Pilate, as He said. I saw Him myself. It was while following Him I was arrested." And Bar Ad told his story.

"Excellency, Annas and Caiaphas wait without."

"I come to them. Come with me, Domina; and you, too, Thaddeus. Hail, Annas. Hail, Caiaphas. What would you?"

"Pilate," burst out Caiaphas, "arrest this impostor, at once, before He reach Herod's border, before the people make Him King."

"Why arrest One you can not kill? Why kill One who can rise again. I have examined witnesses. Everything points one way. Jesus is risen."

"Some one impersonates Him," broke in Annas. "It must be so."

"Yet, Annas, He said that He was the Son of God and that He would rise again. Caiaphas, suppose that He has really risen and is Divine?"

"Then woe and woe to us, Pilate; for we accused Him and you crucified. But no; it can not be! Satan is using some impostor to bring about revolt, provoke you Romans to destroy our city and wipe the worship of the one true God off of the earth. Jerusalem shall be a heap of stones because of this man, unless you act at once; and great Tiberius has scanty patience with those governors whose provinces rebel."

"Do you denounce Jesus for that, or because he is against you?"

"Both, Pilate. I am the true High Priest of the true God. Whoever opposes me opposes God."

"What do you think, Thaddeus? Annas, Caiaphas, let me present to you my friend Lucius Curius Thaddeus, a Roman citizen and knight, son of Lucius Minucius, the Augustan, the friend of Cæsar."

"Hail, High Priests. I know, Pilate, that Jesus has risen as He said and that He will now leave us, ascending unto God, into the heavens, even as He foretold."

"Caius Carinna, the centurion, returns," announced an orderly.

"Approach, Carinna. You are prompt. Your report."

"Excellency, we spurred toward Olivet. Dolabella, in command at the Golden Gate, testifies that Jesus of Nazareth passed out this morning. Upon the highest summit of the Mount of Olives, overlooking Bethany, a multitude was gathered. Out of their midst One rose into the air. His garments gleamed. We were just too far off plainly to see His face. He blessed the multitude and floated upward until a bright cloud received Him out of our sight."

"Incredible!"

"Yet that was what we saw. Those whom we questioned testified that it was Jesus of Nazareth."

"Annas, this makes impossible any impersonation," exclaimed Pilate. "It is as impossible for any other man to ascend into the air as it would be for Jesus. Caiaphas, your people will not revolt. They can not make Jesus King till He returns. He will return, I think, when all nations, everywhere, without shedding blood, are ready to make Him King."

There was a pause of mingled consternation and relief; then Pilate turned to Claudia and asked:

"What do you think, Domina?"

"Jesus the Christ is risen; risen indeed."

With stunned and angry courtesy the High Priests

took their leave. Bar Ad, when Pilate returned to the prætorium, attempted to take his also.

"I thank your Excellency," he said gratefully. "Through your kindness I am safe to-day from Annas and to-morrow from Herod."

"Nay, wait. Where would you go?" protested Claudia.

"To find and make my peace with my wife Karis, Domina, if so it may be; for I have been an angry stubborn fool; and Jesus Christ is risen and ascended and I am safe, and the world begins a new era and I a new life, and all things are made new again after to-day."

Bar Ad spoke wearily, for he had been through a swifter storm of more varied emotions than ever before in his life. The proof of his predictions, admitted now openly by Karis, which would later be admitted by all the disciples; the exultation of the triumph of Jesus; the heartbreak that He had left them; the bitter disappointment of the arrest, preventing farewell; the unexpected and deadly danger from Herodias; the sudden rescue by the Romans, the kindness of Pilate, the tacit certainty of safety now from both Herod and the high priests and, finally, the heartache that Karis had left him and gone on with the disciples to Olivet—these made a greater gamut of more intense emotions than Bar Ad was equipped to bear. He wanted silence, somewhere, to rest and pray.

Claudia would not release him. "What will you give me if I find her for you?" she smiled. "Nay; peace—I know your wife. I met her, heard her story and loved her when she was with the Princess Isha. To-day she came to me to rescue you. Come forward, Karis."

One of the veiled handmaidens at the door threw back her veil and ran, blushing, laughing and weeping all in one, into Bar Ad's open arms.

"I left you at the Golden Gate," he wondered. "I

thought you with the crowd and the disciples, at the crest of Olivet. How came you here, Karis?"

"My husband was in danger of his life. I followed him. If I did wrong Jesus Himself will forgive me. Did I do wrong, Addai?"

"Nay, who am I to judge? I learn, not teach, to-day! Domina Claudia, if you know our story, you know that we have been estranged and this unites us; and therefore we have very many things to whisper to each other. Suffer us, therefore, to depart together, your grateful servants."

"I know that, except Pilate and myself, there are no other Romans of equestrian rank in this whole teeming city. This is a vast palace. Send for your servants and remain my guests till Pilate take me down to Cæsarea."

"A galley-slave and a dancing-girl,"—and Karis spread her hands—"we are not worthy."

"A Roman and his wife! Indulge me, Pilate. Help me. I am lonely for talk with an equal and I would hear of Jesus of Nazareth."

"Very well, Domina," smiled Pilate. "Lucius Curius Thaddeus, I may not command you; but know that in this province the invitation of a procurator is, by courtesy, treated as that of the Emperor whom he represents."

They spent the rest of the day together. The women spoke of Jesus, but Pilate and Bar Ad of everything under Heaven except Jesus of Nazareth.

That night, alone at last with Karis in a splendid apartment of the procurator's palace, Bar Ad took her into his arms, then set her down and knelt at her feet.

"Brave Heart," he said, "I never dreamed how much we loved each other until to-day. Beside the treasure of such love as yours what is the power of doing miracles or healing at Edessa? All my large plans have failed when put to test. One is not tested yet

and holds me off from you. I lay at your feet my power of healing by miracle. If going to Edessa depends on that, I give it up for you. This love of ours sways far more than the flesh, dear. I did not know that it was possible for any human beings to have such friendship for each other as we two. Body and mind and heart and soul I love you. All things are made new to-day. I do not know if it is right to give up all my plans for you; but I do know if I am wrong, that, because of the greatness of our love, God will forgive me."

"I, too, have learned something of love to-day," said Karis softly. "Ought I to have gone to see my Savior ascend in triumph to His Father? Or should I have followed, as I did, the man I love to what, at first, seemed death? I do not know—perhaps shall never know. I only know, like you, if I did wrong, God will forgive me."

"All things are new in heaven and earth to-day, Karis. We will live humbly and quietly, a citizen of Sepphoris and his wife, helping the spread of the Good News as we can and letting great things, knighthoods and miracles and things too high for us, pass by over our heads."

"Kneel down and say our prayers, then, Addai."

XXXV

Bar Ad and Karis would have avoided the assembly of the disciples, if they could, as not being worthy. But, when Pilate went to Cæsarea, Peter swept them into it again, saying, "Nonsense, I am married too." So Pentecost came upon them unaware.

The principal effect of Pentecost on Bar Ad was an increase of common sense. He had thought Karis wrong in condemning him for his defiance of the brethren during the forty days and for his demand for public proof of resurrection. He had forgiven her and loved her in spite of this, her first stupidity. But was Karis stupid? Jesus knew him easily superior in brains and energy to any of the Twelve except, perhaps, John Lightning; while, as John Baptist's right-hand man, he was the logical choice—and yet Jesus had not made him an apostle. Why? Always before he had subconsciously rated that mistake as a defect in Jesus. That could be done no longer. Then he had excused it to himself because his early sinful life was in the way and felt the falseness of the excuse even as he made it; for Jesus cared nothing for forgiven sin. He knew that Jesus knew him through and through, far better than he knew himself. For the first time he tried to look at himself as Jesus must have always seen him, to find why he had walked alone, half-ostracized, unhappy, the very woman who loved him disgusted with him, behind a band rightly exultant with such joy as never was before in heaven or earth. He shut himself up, fasted, prayed to God and then to Jesus, and looked into his life.

The result appalled him.

He had subconsciously treated Karis as impure, while

hugging to his heart the righteous certainty that he himself was clean, his own much worse lusts forgiven—yet both had had the same forgiveness. He marveled she had borne with him so long, far less had loved him—nay, even that God had borne with him. What if, by living with Karis as man and wife, he lost the power to do miracles? Who was he, to do miracles? What worth were miracles beside a wounded soul who loved him?

But Jesus had failed to choose him one of the Twelve before he married Karis. Why?

John Baptist's sin was pride—a prophet's pride in inspiration. His own pride lay in intellect. He had seen clearer than John Baptist—clearer than any one but Jesus and, perhaps, old Malachi. He saw far clearer than the Eleven. Except John Lightning, they were all muddle-headed agnostics beside him. Yet—were they? Suddenly he remembered his appeal at the ford at Bethabara, when he first spoke to Jesus—how he silently prayed the angel of the Lord for a sign and, in the answer of Nathanael, received one; yet, because the words were addressed to another, had not the sense to see it. Perhaps plain straightforward clean sincerity like theirs outgeneraled intellect. Perhaps? Nay, certainly it did. The Eleven were wiser men than he.

But Jesus could have spoken plainly had He chosen. He had not then adopted, as a policy, the language of parable. Why did He not speak plainly?

Probing into his soul, trying to see as Jesus must have seen, that sunrise at Bethabara, he suddenly came upon a thing so elementary that any Nazarite, nay, almost any heathen, could have told him. The very children among the Essenes knew it. He knew it himself, only he had never noticed it in himself, because it had grown up with himself. At some convenient season he meant, and always had meant, to be revenged on Simon.

Staggered by the plain stupidity of this most elementary discovery, he gasped. He a trained mystic? He

intelligent? He saw himself the stupidest half-wit who ever tried to read when he could not recite the alphabet. He had cured sick men. Their illness should have fallen upon him. In the land between food and fasting he had met and vanquished the evil spirits of the visions. The spotted panther of lust and the demon of the madness of hysteria had failed to hold him. He had cast out devils. He marveled that the first one had not blasted him into a gibbering cinder like the things he cured—and then remembered he had cast them out in Jesus' name, not his own. The last and greatest egotism had been spared him.

Reeling with these discoveries, Bar Ad sought something to set against them and found—nothing. Except a certain honesty of purpose and the virtue, if it were a virtue, of blank dismay, he had no assets. He had sincerely believed in his own intelligence, his own energy, his own purity. Even in his worst fits of "Holier than thou" with Karis, he really had felt holier. He had been an unconscious hypocrite, not conscious. Thank God, he had been an honest fool, not a knave. He really had not seen that his plan to make Tiberius save Jesus against Jesus' will, involved the same sin as Judas' plan to make Jesus save Himself against His will, only approached from a different angle. Remembering his feeling of superiority as he looked down into Judas' grave, he also remembered his own prayer for Judas: "Be gentle with him, Lord."

"Be gentle with me, Lord," he prayed within himself. "Spare me what I deserve. Be gentle with me, Lord."

"Thou art forgiven, then, Thaddeus," said a voice. It was within himself. He did not even look around. But he knew well who spoke.

Bar Ad called Byssus and old Malachi apart at Shalluq's house and had a quiet talk with them and Karis. Bar Ad, in rueful and amused humility, found

they agreed with him that he had all his life been a brilliant fool, though all added "lovable" to "brilliant" and Shalluq, who had been called in, added "hot-tempered" to both. Marcus Marcellus Murio, also called in, backed up the three. "I found that was your reputation among the Magi," he remarked. "That was why you were advanced no higher in their councils, but stayed a minor brother. They all liked you, Addai—just as we all love you. They all admitted your great ability—but, they said, you admitted it yourself."

"But, my dear friends and fathers; knowing this of me all my life, how have you borne with me?"

"Hush, Addai," twinkled Karis. "We will not destroy your new and healthy humbleness by telling why—perhaps we all have some new-found humilities ourselves—but we all love you dearly and for cause—for good, good cause, my husband!" She laid her hand on his and looked around at the old men. They nodded.

There was a moment of dewy-eyed silence and then Bar Ad reached into his bosom and produced his three most cherished possessions; the letter from Simon, the receipt from Bar Abbas, and the letter of King Agbarus to Jesus. He spread them on the table before him.

"These," he said, "have rankled in my spirit like broken arrows in a leopard's flank. What should I do with them?"

"The letter of King Agbarus really belongs to the Eleven," decided Malachi. "Give it to them and let them send whom they will to him. As it is, you could go and joyfully be received; but could you heal Agbarus? yea, and the thousand sick folk of Edessa?"

"I think I could," mused Addai. "I hope I could—in Jesus' name. The power is my Savior's and not mine. Still, it is not common sense to start a world-campaign with a divided mind and with two voices. Do you agree with Malachi, my masters? You do? So be it, then. I will surrender Agbarus' letter to

the Eleven, and with it my ambition. Now, what of Bar Abbas and these two papers concerning Simon? Some one ought to destroy Bar Abbas. The Romans do not. Herod can not. I can. He is a plague to Israel and, without him, the people would have freed Jesus. Would it be worthy discipline, then, if I should crush him, or would it be revenge? Then, how of Simon? All of his life he has hated every one. He ought to be destroyed. Here, in these papers, lies the power to do it. Does the fact that I am his brother and his life-long victim make that an unworthy deed for me to do, or does the fact that I alone can do it point me out as the one who should?"

"Forgive your enemies," quoted Karis.

"Yes, truly, but how? What would the naked weeping slave-girls in the cave, what would the ruined merchants on the road, say if I forgive Bar Abbas and do nothing?"

"I think you should destroy Bar Abbas," judged Malachi, "not in revenge but as an act of mercy unto others, especially as you say that you are pledged to visit the cave."

"Let us take Kleon and Melitta," suggested Karis, "and go and look at Simon."

Thus it came about that Bar Ad and Kleon, with Karis and Melitta, happened at sunset, a few days later, upon a little group of bandits upon the bank of the Jordan, robbing a couple of frightened Egyptian merchants. Bar Ad roared, raised his staff and rushed at them. The robbers recognized him, shouted his name and fled; but not before he identified their leader as Kaleph the One-eyed.

"The band is at its old tricks again," stormed Bar Ad, when the merchants had gone rejoicing on their way, "its old tricks against orders. Simon can wait. I must look into this. The Romans know both exits from the cave, now. Whenever they think it worth

while to expend a hundred men they will stop both and every soul will perish; and, if the band keep up small robberies like this, they will soon irritate Pilate into thinking it worth while. Therefore time presses. I had better go alone. At first there may be danger."

"Addai bar Ad, my dear Lord," answered Karis, "when you and I are separated again with my consent, because of danger, I hope it may be twenty years from now—or forty."

"Nay, but I need a lever," laughed Bar Ad, "to pry the band out of its hole in the rock and topple it to ruin. That lever is a messenger to Pilate. That messenger must stay a day and a night where I can find him; then, if I do not come, must take my word swiftly to Cæsarea."

"Use Kleon, then," said Karis, "and Melitta."

"But, Karis——"

"Are you so blind you do not see they like to be together?"

They camped on the river-bank where they were, crossed at gray dawn next morning, went leisurely, left Kleon and Melitta in hiding under a cliff and reached Elijah's pool well before midday. Bar Ad went slowly up the familiar path until, at the third turn, an arrow glanced from the rock beside him.

"Halt, idiots," he shouted. "Bring out Kaleph the One-eyed. Send word in to Bar Abbas that Addai bar Ad, your lieutenant, is back to take command and needs to see him."

There proved to be only about forty of the bandits left, of whom ten veterans obeyed. These knew Bar Ad and cowed the others. Kaleph was apologetic about his raid:

"'Tis true that we have grain enough for months, yet," he admitted, "also a little silver—but you took long a-coming, Addai bar Ad. Men can not sit for ever in the heart of a stone, like toads, and twiddle

their fingers. I have to take them out for air and exercise."

"Meanwhile the Romans know just where your cave is, and both its entrances—and yet you irritate them with small robberies and pinpricks close at home. You are asking, simply begging, to be crucified. Where are your brains? Bar Abbas must be ill. Where *is* Bar Abbas?"

"In his own quarters, sir. He has a fever, though rather of the mind than of the body. His brain is keen as ever, sometimes, but he gives us almost no orders. For days we do not see him."

"Take us to him."

Bar Abbas' private cavern had lost its splendors. Apparently he had not cared to fit it up again after the Romans sacked it. About the only remnant of past luxury was a girl, still kept on guard in the antechamber as torch-holder. Karis surveyed her with pity, then turned to Bar Ad saying: "You never told me this."

"I did not think to. When the chief is in, this has gone on for two hundred—three hundred years. The girls take turns at it. They used rather to like the duty, for none were allowed to touch them. We grew to notice them no more than other furniture."

"Well, break the custom of three hundred years now. Release her."

"Take this cloak and cover yourself, my dear," ordered Bar Ad. "Then follow with your torch."

Bar Abbas' heavy door was open. He lay in the light which came from a crack in the rock. At Bar Ad's voice he sat up and blinked.

"Addai bar Ad," he said, "they told me you would come. I stayed alive for that."

"What is the matter with you, Bar Abbas? In what way are you ill?"

Karis slipped forward and laid a hand upon his head.

"The man has fever of the brain," she said. "I marvel that he lived at all."

"It may be fever," smiled Bar Abbas. "The world is full of voices which are not there and shadows which are shadows only. But, mostly, I see Jesus of Nazareth, who could have turned the people with a word and saved Himself yet died instead of me."

"If you see Jesus," answered Bar Ad, "you are not far from Him. Do you believe that He can cure you?"

"Certainly."

"I am His servant, sent by Him. Do you believe that I can cure you in His name?"

"Certainly, if you will."

"Will you give up this bitter trade of bandit?"

"I only hold it for my men—for the little while left, till Pilate walls us up here. They have been faithful to me."

"What did you take it up for?"

"The son of Herod the Great by a slave-woman—illegitimate—my father's genius burning in my veins—a prince and no prince—son of a king, son of a slave—what else was I to do?"

"You know that I can cure in Jesus' name?"

"I know it."

"Then kneel and pray."

"I have forgotten how."

"Then I shall pray for you: 'O Lord, who could have saved Thine Own life by sacrificing this man, and chose to die instead, save him again, for his soul clings to Thee.' Bar Abbas, in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and be whole."

"I beg your pardon, lady," said Bar Abbas, in quite a different voice, "that I remained seated before you."

He sprang to his feet, then swayed and began, as it were, to brush cobwebs from his eyes.

"Is it really you, Addai? I thought the whole thing was a dream."

"It is really I, friend. How do you feel?"

"Perfectly well. Oh, good physician! What is your fee?"

"Your promise to give up these robberies. Your heart, mind, soul and body—all that you are—for Jesus of Nazareth—why, what is this?"

"Your cloak, sir," said the girl with the torch and knelt at his feet. "I am not fit to wear it. But, oh, sir, there are poor girls in another chamber of this cave—prisoners—weary—heartbroken—soiled—some of them sick in body. Come heal their bodies and, if it may be, heal their souls—for even here we, too, have heard of Jesus of Nazareth."

"Poor thing," cried Karis. "Oh, you poor, poor thing," and put her arms around her.

"Come," ordered Bar Ad, and led them all to the girls' cave. Bar Abbas swept the sentinel from the door with a single gesture and robbers and all went in. There were about fifty girls, engaged in the usual amusements of prisoners. At the entry of the men they clothed themselves with their bedding. Karis, as if by instinct, found the sick-bay. Three were on pallets.

"Addai, come here," she called.

One had a fever, one a festered shoulder and one—a baby. All had heard of Jesus. In half an hour the fever was gone, the shoulder cleansed, bound up and free from inflammation, and the mother hushing her child and walking it to and fro. The bandits, watching this, muttered among themselves. Then Karis, who had been slowly growing more and more angry all this time, began to snap out orders.

"Line up these men for me," she called.

Bar Ad did so. Two men were slow about it. Bar Abbas silently walked over and peered into their faces. They leaped into line.

"Line up those girls."

Bar Ad did so.

"Outcasts of Israel," proclaimed Karis, "the time will come when through Jesus of Nazareth, such plague-spots as this will cease from all the world. This shall cease now. The poor girls can not help themselves; but you men—you men who use such customs as the Gentiles——"

"Nay, not so bad as that, lady," whispered Kaleph hoarsely. "Most of us have our favorites and leave the rest alone. The tall girl third from the end of the line is mine. I'll marry her if she will take me."

"What insolence is this," growled one of the new men. "Bar Abbas being ill, in walks this deep-voiced stranger, orders us about, says that we must break up the band and lets his woman scold us. Kill him and put her with the girls. She's pretty enough. I'll take her."

"Staves," cheered Bar Ad. "Staves, staves!"

So great is the power of habit that, in a twinkling, staves were produced and the objector, a great hairy athlete of a man, came forward nothing loath. Most of the new men gathered behind him, the girls and most of the old men behind Bar Abbas and Bar Ad. When all was ready, Bar Abbas suddenly snatched the staff from Bar Ad's hands and took his place.

"Not so, Bar Abbas. You have been ill," protested Bar Ad.

"Shall my own rascals beard me in my own cave?" Bar Abbas gritted. "As for illness, I never felt better in my life."

"Nay, but Bar Abbas outskills all of us," the hairy man objected. "I challenged the stranger."

"You'd better be content," rasped Kaleph One-eye. "The stranger is a man lanista-taught. Ten weeks ago, at Sepphoris, I saw him defeat on the sand, with a staff, ten full-armed Roman soldiers."

"Guard yourself, Jochabed," said Bar Abbas mildly, "and learn that, if I say this band dissolve, dissolved it is."

Mildly as he spoke, the blow with which he emphasized his words was far from mild. When Jochabed fell, after a few passes, Bar Abbas kept straight on into his backers. Bar Ad caught up a staff. Kaleph and his veterans drew sword and followed. The very girls screamed "freedom" and threw stones. They fairly chased what new men Bar Abbas left standing out of the cave and down the path.

"I hear that Jesus is a man of peace," whispered Kaleph One-eye dryly, to Bar Ad as they stood at the top and watched the last of the fugitives clatter down the pathway.

"This is a peaceful end for such a thing," answered Bar Ad grimly. "More peaceful, far, than crosses."

Bar Abbas and Bar Ad divided the loose money in the cave among the men, all but a purse which Bar Ad claimed as the girls' share, to buy them food. Karis claimed all the girls. "Though what on earth I shall do with them," said Bar Ad, "only the Lord Himself knows. They must leave here, however, as soon as it is dark, before those fugitives have time to betray the cave and bring the Romans on us."

Five of the veterans picked girls from among them, each man agreeing to marry his. Bar Ad agreed to take these men along and, when he could, to find them honest employment. Bar Abbas promised to do the same by the other five veterans and by those muddle-headed new men who had been stunned and so remained among them. Karis opened the store-rooms, clothed the girls and made up a bundle for each. Bar Ad sent a messenger with a ring, who brought up Kleon and Melitta. The girls themselves were promised freedom and restoration to their families, if they had any, as soon as it could be managed. Bar Ad and Bar Abbas arranged

to communicate with each other through Shalluq. Old Sheba was left alone in the cave by her own choice, with grain enough for twenty years and firewood and torches enough for two. As soon as it grew dark Bar Abbas and his men left for Jerusalem, while Bar Ad and his caravan of women set out for Simon's house in Galilee.

"For now," declared Bar Ad, "God hath given me evident guidance. I must crush Simon and take the estate away from him that I may have a place to keep, and means to feed and shelter, these Our Lord's poor rescued unfortunates."

XXXVI

Bar Ad led his absurd and pathetic little caravan of girls straight up into the empty sheep-pastures on the top of the high whale-backed hills above irrigation level. He kept them together in the darkness by giving them all a cord to hold. The march they made that night exhausted them and they slept most of the next day in a cup-shaped hollow on a hilltop, spreading cloaks over boulders to make a little shade. Their garments irked them so much that they had to be warned against sunburn. At sunrise and sunset they ate what pounded wheat they had and drank a little wine. A few shepherds saw them from a distance but, noting the armed men, they came no closer. They were picked girls, with possibilities of tremendous beauty, but so haggard, pale and anemic that they were like plants grown in a cellar, and Bar Ad wondered that he had ever found their predecessors pretty. Karis found much healing for him to do in the way of washing cuts and binding up bruises, principally as an excuse for him to talk with them, one by one, for the real healing needed was that of hearts and spirits. He got their birthplaces and the outlines of their stories, made what promises he could probably fulfill and told them of the new world which it was now possible to build because of Jesus. He asked them to help to build it; so that, at last, they became almost cheerful, though with a wistful happiness which was heartbreaking. He shepherded them the next night, slowly and with difficulty, to the hills above Armageddon, and settled them, about sunrise, on the high sheep-downs behind Simon's house. Then he and Karis went down to speak with Simon. They circled, in order to reach it from the front.

Karis had been too busy with her girls to talk much with Bar Ad, but now she asked him:

"Addai, have you always hated Simon?"

"Always, Karis, since I was a helpless little boy and he a cruel, jealous, big one."

"Think back. Think carefully. Was he never kind?"

"No, never—yet, wait. Yes, come to think of it, he was, at times, though mostly he tormented. I was ill, twice, and he was good to me. I remember, too, one night as a little chap, I was afraid of the dark and he lay down by me. I fell asleep that night safe in the hollow of his arm."

"Is it far now?"

"There is the house ahead of us."

"And now, Shalluq says, he is paralyzed. Cure him, Addaï."

"How can I smite him, then, and save the girls?"

"With Shalluq's help, if we live frugally, we can take care of them till we can send them home."

"It is not possible that I should heal. I hate him."

"All things are possible to him who believeth."

Bar Ad mechanically made the answer which was already, for Christ's men, growing to be almost ritual: "Lord, I believe, Help Thou mine unbelief." Then he relapsed into silent struggle with himself and Karis let him be.

Addai stopped at last, where the home-road left the paved highway to Sepphoris, and pointed:

"There, Karis, the good old man, my father, sat on the flat roof you see over the fruit-trees up this road, and watched for me. He saw me turn in here, a ragged tramp, and ran and fell upon my neck and kissed me. Just there, the bandits took us, before I really had time to get used to the ring on my finger and the new robe or was quite fed-up on fatted calf. Now, we have robbed the band, and bring its spoils here!"

"My dear Lord, do not jest; that which *I* robbed you of has all come back and my whole self with it. Where did you ride?"

"On the flat-topped mountain to the south, behind the house, beyond where the girls camp. Look! There are the beehives where I was stung as a little boy. Now I think of it, Simon put mud on the stings. I fell out of that apple-tree, once, and almost broke my neck. There is the pond I nearly drowned in, before I learned to swim in it. Simon threw me, once, into that irrigation-channel; in fact, I have fallen into every irrigation-channel on the place. I was into all sorts of mischief, like a puppy. I must have been a very naughty little boy."

"Without a mother!"

"Yes, Karis, without a mother; but, oh, with such a father."

"Did he love Simon, Addai?"

"Perhaps—after a fashion—not so much as me—but—yes, he loved him."

Among other things they had, the night before, prayed for an easy entrance. They found Simon, with a stick in one hand and the other on a servant's shoulder, hobbling out to look at a new stone bench under a fig-tree. Bar Ad introduced himself as Thaddeus, a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, who had come to get the use of the upper pasture-land of the estate as a camping-place, in case the Apostles came that way.

"Certainly not," snapped Simon. "I can't have crowds upon my land. I thought that all this traveling and healing was over now, since Jesus is dead and buried. Did those fanatics send you?"

"He rose again," answered Bar Ad. "As for healing, His followers, since Pentecost, heal hundreds. Here, let me ease you down upon that bench. You think them merely fanatics? Most of the wealthy landowners believe them mad."

"They can not be," barked Simon. "They hate Pharisees."

"You used to be a Pharisee yourself," said Addai softly.

"How do you know, young man? And why does one of Jesus' disciples travel with a woman?"

"She is my wife. We lingered at Jerusalem after Passover, till He ascended. Now I bring her home. Why do you hate the Pharisees?"

"They promise that God will bless all good Pharisees—then steal from one another. They helped Annas and Caiaphas to rob me—oh, legally, legally. I have no redress in law."

"Sir, you look blest enough. This is a great estate and prosperous."

"Without an heir, young man, without an heir. I have no children. I have been robbed of half my savings and I am crippled and half dead. The hand of God is heavy on me."

"If the Eleven came and camped here, or one of them, or even one of their followers, you might be cured. I have seen hundreds such as you made whole, and have cured dozens."

"You—have cured—dozens?"

"Oh, not by my own power. I have no power of my own. By Jesus' power."

"Jesus is dead."

"And risen."

"I have heard stories of His cures, too many to deny. I have even heard, apart from what you tell me, of cures made in His name since Pentecost. I can not say that I believed them."

"Have you here any who believe?"

"Why, yes, among the tenants, one or two."

"Have any gone to Him and come back cured?"

"I have heard stories."

"Then send this boy, here, to say that Thaddeus,

one of Jesus' men, one of the Seventy, is with you. If they will bring hither their sick who believe in Jesus, I will cure them."

"I can not have work stopped for nonsense."

"The Pharisees call it nonsense, Simon. Therefore it can not be."

"True, young man, true. Then, better yet, help me to hobble to a house or two where there is sickness. No, best of all, there is a woman here who asked of me a servant and a donkey that she might go to Jesus and be cured, when He passed here last. I did not give them. Try her. Give me your arm, young man. Boy, go and tell your mistress we are coming."

Bar Ad on one side and Karis on the other, Simon worked his way into the house. There, in a great chair in the sitting-room, propped up with pillows, her handmaids round her, sat Miriam, shaking with palsy. In spite of Addai's beard and hair, his leanness and the change in his eyes, she knew him instantly. He laid a finger on his lips and took command.

"I am Thaddeus, one of Jesus' men," he announced, "one of the Seventy. I have heard of your faith in Jesus and have come to cure you."

"At last, dear Lord, at last," gasped Miriam, "my prayers are answered."

"Then you believe in Jesus of Nazareth?"

"I do."

"And you believe that one of His servants, sent by Him, can cure you?"

"Of course."

"Bring oil," ordered Bar Ad. When it was brought he anointed her forehead and the palms of her hands, laid his hands on her head and prayed:

"O God of Israel, loosen this Thine handmaid, whom Satan hath bound, for Jesus Christ's sake. Miriam, sister, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

"Miriam?" questioned Simon. "Sister?" then hushed, for Miriam stretched out hands that did not shake, laid them on the arms of her chair and rose. "Addai," she said, "show me how to find Jesus."

"Addai?" asked Simon.

"In the name of our great hate, which has turned to love, hush, Simon. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, who is love incarnate, step forward and be whole!"

Simon looked around, stupefied. He dropped his stick and moved his withered arm and it moved easily. His face, contorted to one side, straightened. He held his helpless fingers out and closed them. He took a step forward, then another, and the steps were steady. Then, suddenly, he ran and knelt at Bar Ad's feet.

"In the name of your Jesus of Nazareth," he said, "forgive me, Addai."

About a week later Thomas the Apostle, with scrip and staff, strode cheerfully into the house one afternoon, guided by Kleon. After greetings he demanded to be shown the girls from the cave, now spinning, weaving, sewing, cooking, washing, tending poultry and babies, turning drying figs and raisins on their frames and earning, peacefully and happily, their own living. He watched the frolic-hour, just before sunset, when those of the girls who had earned the privilege by the best day's work, bathed, in the courtyard fountain, the motherless babies whom childless Miriam had gathered from miles around and made her own. He watched the twilight worship and took part in it. He took his share of the great supper in the huge assembly-hall, where the full household of a hundred sat down at table. At last he rose.

"Simon bar Ad," he said, "now father of the fatherless; Miriam, thou joyful mother of many children; Addai bar Ad, who follows Jesus; Karis, to whom Mary Mother sends love; Kleon and you, Melitta, whom

Jesus healed; and all you others whom Addai has brought to God; greeting! I come to bring to every one of you, except Addai here, great sorrow; yet sorrow that shall carry pride with it, yea, and great joy. When Bar Abbas came to the brethren at Jerusalem and told how Addai had destroyed his robbers, we were well pleased: but when Kleon, here, sent by Karis, galloped in and reported to the Eleven how Addai had revenged himself on Simon, his life-long enemy and his brother, we gave great thanks to God. Therefore it has seemed well to God and unto us that Addai bar Ad, of Armageddon, with Kleon, both of the Seventy, should be by us appointed swiftly to redeem Jesus' promise that, after He was lifted up, He would send disciples, the first missionaries, to heal Agbarus, king of Edessa, and to bring life unto His followers. Addai, you surrendered to the Eleven this letter from Agbarus to Jesus, and with it your most cherished hope. Receive them both again; and Jesus Christ go with you."

There was such weeping that Bar Ad said nothing, but put the letter into his bosom. Then Karis and Miriam flung themselves into his arms.

Next sunrise, Thomas stood with Simon and Miriam upon the housetop where good old Ad bar Ad so often sat. They watched a little group step aside from the great, crowded, east-and-west road where it went out of sight over the hill, and stand for a moment upon the crest, outlined against the golden sky.

"Addai with Karis on the right," peered Simon. "See, he raises his staff. Kleon and Melitta are on the left. Who is that tall stranger between them, whom they do not seem to see? He looks as bright as if the sun shone through him!"

Then Thomas knelt.

THE END

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When he came to himself

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